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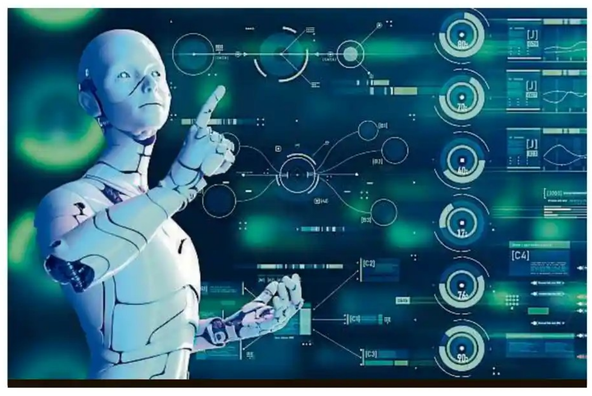

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Modi calls for khadi purchases on Oct 2

PM makes swadeshi push for Gandhi Jayanti

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat', invoked Mahatma Gandhi to urge people to adopt swadeshi goods, and asked them to buy khadi products on October 2 on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.

"In the last 11 years, the attraction of the people of the country towards khadi has increased significantly. Say with pride that these are swadeshi. Also share it on social media," he said.

Modi has emphasised the use of local products since the imposition of trade tariffs by the Trump administration, even as India continues to work with the US to negotiate a trade deal.

With the Bihar elections round the corner, the Prime Minister also announced that the Indian government is working to get the Chhath Puja listed in Unesco's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

"When Chhath Puja is included in the Unesco list, people in every corner of the world will be able to experience its grandeur and divinity," Modi said.

He also lauded the RSS, which will celebrate its 100th foundation day on Vijayadashmi.

"This spirit of 'Nation First' always remains paramount in every action and every endeavour of the lives of millions of volunteers. I offer my best wishes to every volunteer who is dedicating himself to the great yagya of serving the nation," the prime minister said.

Modi, during the 126th episode of Mann Ki Baat, interacted with two officers of the Indian Navy, Lieutenant Commander Dilna and Lieutenant Commander Roopa, who have embarked on an expedition to circumnavigate the globe on board INSV Tirani.

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

"Make vocal for local your shopping mantra. Resolve, that for all times, you will buy only what is produced in the country. You will take home only what is made by the people of the country. You will use only those goods which bear the toil of a citizen of the country.

Hazarika & Zubeen

Modi also paid tributes to legendary singer Bhupen Hazarika, emphasising how his songs connected different countries. He also remembered singer Zubeen Garg, who died in Singapore, describing him as one of the brightest stars of Assam. The PM said Garg's music will inspire generations.

After Kashmir, Ladakh tourism hit by unrest & weather shocks

This week's violent events have led many tourists to alter their travel plans

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Tourism, the economic backbone of Ladakh Union Territory, is facing a sharp downturn as a mix of political unrest and erratic weather has disrupted the region's usually busy autumn season.

Barely weeks after torrential rains and sudden snowfall in August forced cancellations, the September 24 clashes in Leh, capital of Ladakh—where four people died and nearly 90 were injured—have deepened the crisis. Hoteliers, taxi operators, and travel agents say bookings have plunged, leaving the cold desert's economy in turmoil.

Tourism in Ladakh has been on the rise in recent years, with both domestic and international tourist footfall increasing, officials said. However, since Wednesday, curfew has remained in force in violence-hit Leh, with police and paramilitary forces intensifying patrols and security checks.

"We have seen a 30% booking cancellation rate. Every tour operator is getting calls from one or two clients requesting trip cancellations," said Dorjay Stumpa, President of the All Ladakh Tour Operator Association (ALTOA).

The summer tourism season in Leh typically runs until October 15. Despite continued good weather, this week's violent events have led many tourists to alter their travel plans.

Sonam Tsering, who runs a home-stay in Leh said, "First the weather, now the violence. We are staring at one of the worst autumns in recent years. Cancellations have shot up since the clashes. Even those who had confirmed bookings are hesitating."

For Ladakh, August and September are traditionally strong months, drawing trekkers, bikers, and cultural tourists before winter sets in. But with curfews, heightened security checks, and images of protests dominating news cycles, operators say the flow of visitors has thinned.

The timing, stakeholders stress, could not be worse. Ladakh's tourism season is short and intense, typically running from May to October. Once harsh winter sets in, heavy snowfall closes mountain passes and the region is largely cut off for nearly six months.

"We earn in half a year to survive the other half. Losing the autumn season means families will have nothing to fall back on till next summer," explained Rigzin Dorjay, a cab owner in Leh.

Taxi unions, who form a large slice of the local workforce, report steep losses. "Many drivers had invested in new vehicles after two good years of tourism. Now they are unable to cover even loan installments," Dorjay said.

The unrest has also dealt a blow to small traders who rely on footfall at markets and monasteries. "In August, rain washed away business. In September, clashes kept tourists indoors. We don't know what October will bring," said Padma Dolma, who sells handicrafts near Thiksey Monastery.

Ladakh under attack by BJP, RSS: Rahul

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Coming in support of the protest by Ladakhis, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said Ladakh's "amazing people, culture, and traditions are under attack by the BJP and RSS".

Batting for including the union territory in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, he said, "Ladakhis asked for a voice. The BJP responded by killing four young men and jailing Sonam Wangchuk. Stop the killing. Stop the violence. Stop the intimidation."

"Give Ladakh a voice. Give them the 6th Schedule," Rahul, who is presently on a South American tour, said on 'X'.

His comments came days after violence in Leh in which four people were killed in police firing and over 50 were injured.

Activist Wangchuk, who was on a hunger strike, was arrested under the National Security Act and lodged in Jodhpur jail, with police claiming that they were investigating his alleged Pakistan links.

The people of Ladakh have been demanding statehood for the union territory and placing it under Schedule 6, which grants tribal communities limited autonomy in governance.

'Raised our voice for rights': Youths on protest

SRINAGAR, DHNS

Days after violent clashes in Leh left four people dead and dozens injured, the statehood agitation in Ladakh continues to roil the cold desert region.

While police have accused climate activist Sonam Wangchuk of instigating the mob and hinted at "foreign links," voices from the ground and leaders of the Ladakh Apex Body (LAB) reject that version, insisting the anger was entirely homegrown.

Two young men who were part of last Wednesday's hunger strike told *DH* over the phone that the agitation was meant to remain non-violent.

"We were there from eight in the morning. Around 1,000 to 1,500 people had assembled, raising slogans for Sixth Schedule protections. Our leaders, including the Ladakh Apex Body and Sonam Wangchuk, had told us not to step outside. It was supposed to be peaceful," one said.

Both youths, who requested anonymity fearing reprisals, said they were speaking at great personal risk. "Even our phones may be recorded, and we could be jailed like dozens of others in the past two days," one of them said.

According to their account, tensions rose after the health of two elderly hunger strikers deteriorated and they were shifted to hospital. "People were angry that the government was ignoring their condition. Around the same time, a group of youths with tricolours argued with CRPF men outside the park. Suddenly tear smoke shells were fired. That created panic and outrage. The violence that followed was spontaneous, not pre-planned," the second youth recalled.

People pay their respects to 24-year-old Stanzin Namgyal, who was killed during the recent Ladakh statehood protests, as his mortal remains are taken for last rites amid curfew in Leh on Sunday. PTI

They underlined that the gathering was entirely local. "One of those killed was an ex-army man. Our elderly and even children were not spared from teargas. We have always stood by the country and its armed forces. Hundreds from our region serve in uniform. Asking for our rights under the Constitution is not anti-national," one said. The Leh Apex Body, which has spearheaded the demand for statehood and constitutional safeguards, has strongly rejected suggestions of foreign hand in the agitation. "To project the agitation as being controlled by foreign hands is not only untrue but also an insult to the people of Ladakh," said LAB senior member Ashraf Ali.

He said the September 24 protests were fuelled by local frustration and not outside interference. "Some non-local labourers from Nepal, Doda, and other places got caught in the clashes and were injured, but this was never an external plot," Ali said.

The LAB has reiterated its demand for a judicial inquiry into the incident.

Wangchuk's wife denies Pak link, slams NSA detention

LEH/NEW DELHI, PTI: Jailed activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali Angmo has trashed allegations of "Pakistan link" and financial irregularities against him.

Terming the charge that Wangchuk incited the violence in Leh as "misplaced", she claimed that he has been protesting in the "most Gandhian way possible" and the "situation escalated" on September 24 due to the actions of the CRPF.

Police detained climate activist Wangchuk on Friday under the stringent NSA, two days after protests demanding Sixth Schedule status and statehood for Ladakh turned violent in Leh last Wednesday, claiming four lives and injuring 90 others.

Angmo, the co-founder of Himalayan Institute of Alternative Learning (HIAL), said she has not been able to communicate with her husband since his detention and dismissed all allegations against the climate activist and their institutions.

Claiming that they have not been handed over a copy of the detention order, Angmo said, "They promised to send it on Friday. We will take legal recourse."

Ladakh DGP S D Singh Jamwal has said Wangchuk is being probed for allegedly having links with Pakistan on the back of last month's arrest of a Pakistani Intelligence Operative who sent videos of his protests across the border.

The police chief also cited some of Wangchuk's "suspicious" foreign trips, including to Pakistan to attend an event by The Dawn.

Angmo, however, clarified that their recent visit to the neighbouring country was purely professional and climate-focused.

Denouncing the allegations of Pakistan links involving her husband, she said all of Wangchuk's overseas visits were made on the invitation of reputed institutions.

"We attended a conference organised by the United Nations, and it was on climate change. The glacier on the top of the Himalayas is not going to see whether I'm flowing into Pakistan or India," she said. She said the 'Breathe Pakistan' conference held in February was organised by the United Nations Pakistan.

"I was also there to present a paper on women's role in climate change... In fact, he (Wangchuk) praised Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi on stage at the event.

"The Nepal and Bangladesh reference being bandied around is actually an example Sonam gave, i.e., 'when governments are not responsive, it leads to a revolution'. We should avoid interpretations," she said.

EC to deploy 470 officers for Bihar polls, bypolls

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Election Commission has appointed 470 officers as its general, police and expenditure observers for the upcoming Assembly elections in Bihar and seven Assembly bypolls to ensure "fairness, impartiality and credibility of elections".

Of the 470 officers, 320 are from IAS, 60 from IPS and 90 from services like IRS, IRAS and ICAS.

CEC Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi will hold a meeting with these observers on October 3 before they head to Bihar.

They will be deployed in constituencies in Bihar as well as in Budgam and Nagrota (J&K), Anta (Rajasthan), Ghatsila (Jharkhand), Jubilee Hills (Telangana), Tarn Taran (Punjab), Dampa (Mizoram) and Nuapada (Odisha).

"The observers are entrusted with the crucial and solemn responsibility to ensure the fairness, impartiality and credibility of elections, which ultimately forms the bedrock of our democratic polity," a statement said.

Why BJP's 'infiltrator' story in Bihar doesn't add up

ABHAY KUMAR
PATNA

In the past six months, whenever both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have visited Bihar, one issue has consistently been raised: infiltrators in the state.

Even on Saturday, before concluding his two-day Bihar visit, Shah urged party workers to pull out all the stops to ensure the NDA secures a two-thirds majority, saying, "Then we will throw out all the infiltrators."

In theory, Shah's call may energise the party cadre, but many party workers know that the infiltration issue has become irrelevant. Of the 65 lakh bogus voters (out of 7.2 crore voters in Bihar) removed from the electoral roll, not a single voter has been struck off on the grounds of being an outsider or infiltrator.

"Amit Shah is the Union Home Minister and the second-most influential person in the government. He should release the names and number of infiltrators removed from the electoral roll during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise conducted in Bihar so far," said Opposition leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his deputy Samrat Choudhary during the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of schemes, in Gopalganj. PTI

Tejashwi added that, according to the affidavit submitted by the Election Commission before the Supreme Court, not a single infiltrator has been identified in Bihar so far, despite the Modi-Shah combine repeatedly harping on 'ghuspaithiya' (infiltrators) from Bangladesh and Nepal to polarise votes.

"Modi has been the PM since 2014. Amit Shah has been the Union Home Minister since 2019. Nitish has been the Bihar CM since 2005. If infiltrators have still sneaked into Bihar, who should be held responsible," asked senior RJD leader and former Rajya Sabha member Shivanand Tiwary.

Poll strategist-cum-politician Prashant Kishor, whose newly launched party Jan Suraaj will enter the Assembly polls, says that rather than focusing on infiltration, Shah and Modi should address the corruption charges against NDA ministers in the Nitish regime.

Political experts point to the Jharkhand election held in December 2024, where the BJP raised the issue of infiltration but the issue fell flat at the hustings.

"Jharkhand was part of undivided Bihar until 2000. During the 2024 Jharkhand polls, BJP leaders raised the issue of infiltration since Jharkhand also shares borders with West Bengal and Bangladesh. However, the issue did not deliver gains for the BJP, which suffered a defeat in the polls," said an editor of a Hindi daily who previously worked in Jharkhand before shifting to Bihar.

Oppn races to finalise seat deal ahead of Bihar elections

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

With the countdown to the announcement of the poll schedule starting, the 'Mahagathbandhan' (Grand Alliance) is rushing to conclude a seat-sharing deal in Bihar, where coalition heavyweights RJD and Congress may end up giving up at least a dozen seats each, which they contested in 2020, to accommodate new entrants and balance the aspirations of other parties.

Hectic negotiations are ongoing amid grandstanding by allies, but there is a broad consensus that the final seat allocation will only be known after detailed discussions weighing the pros and cons on a seat-by-seat basis. The RJD and Congress face pressure to cede seats, while smaller parties are seeking a bigger pie.

The Opposition coalition is upbeat after the success of the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' and believes that the JD(U)-BJP government is under pressure on several fronts, including employment and law and order.

In 2020, the RJD had contested 144 seats and won 75, while the Congress, which contested 70, could only win 19. The CPI(ML)L contested 19 and won 12, while the CPI won two out of six, and the CPM two out of four.

Neither the RJD nor the Congress has publicly committed to reducing its seat share, though leaders privately indicate that adjustments will be necessary. In this scenario, both parties may have to give up 12–14 seats each.

Sources said this could allow the CPI(ML)L to increase its tally by around half a dozen seats, though they are aiming for an increase of at least 12 seats. New entrant VIPs may get a dozen seats, while the JMM and LJP (Paras) could receive two seats each. The CPI may get six seats and the CPM four.

The CPI(ML)L, which joined the alliance at the last minute in 2020, had initially aimed to contest 40–45 seats. In 2020, the party contested alone in 30 seats, but after negotiations, it joined the RJD-led Grand Alliance and agreed to contest only 19.

The Congress is also holding internal meetings, and is learnt to have decided to field its sitting MLAs again. However, all is not well in the Congress camp, with senior MP Tariq Ahmed skipping a meeting of the Screening Committee.

On Saturday, he posted on 'X', "The announcement of the Bihar Legislative Assembly elections could happen anytime. Supporters and workers of the Congress party are eagerly awaiting the list of candidates. It is hoped that this time, honest, dedicated and grassroots workers will be given priority."

Security forces foil infiltration bid along LoC

SRINAGAR, PTI: Security forces foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K's Keran sector on Sunday, officials said.

Troops noticed suspicious movement along the LoC in the Keran sector of north Kashmir's Kupwara district and challenged the intruders.

In a brief exchange of fire, two infiltrators are believed to have been killed. However, their bodies have not yet been retrieved. The search operation is ongoing, the officials said.

No govt line in Raj Bhavan articles: Kerala CM

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday released the official magazine of the Kerala Raj Bhavan, cautioning that the opinions and views expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect those of the government.

Pinarayi Vijayan

The event at Raj Bhavan was eagerly anticipated, as the presence of a 'Bharatmatha' picture at earlier functions had faced strong government objections. However, the 'Bharatmatha' image was absent at Sunday's event.

Releasing the quarterly magazine 'Rajahams', the CM said there might be articles expressing opinions that contradict those of the state government. He cited the article titled 'Article 200 and a Constitutional Conundrum' published in the magazine's first edition as an example.

"The opinions expressed by the writer on the Governor's powers do not fully align with the state government's views," said Vijayan, who released the magazine by handing a copy to Congress leader and Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor.

The state recently witnessed intense friction between the government and the Raj Bhavan over the use of a picture of 'Bharatmatha' with a saffron flag at official functions. Vijayan had said that the Raj Bhavan should not be lowered to the standards of an RSS shakha.

ARCHIVE ACCESS

Congress to digitise party records

NEW DELHI, DHNS

From records of AICC sessions to manifestos from 1952 Lok Sabha election, copies of now-defunct 'Socialist India' weekly and speeches of party presidents, Congress is all set to digitise a slice of its recorded history and make it accessible to its workers and public.

All these records, which also include Congress reports on every Lok Sabha outcome, in physical forms, are now part of the Dr Manmohan Singh Research Centre and Library, inaugurated last Friday by Sonia Gandhi.

The party is also now looking for an experienced librarian and archivist who could manage the library, which at present has around 1,200 books with separate sections dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and P V Narasimha Rao, among others.

Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh, who donated a substantial number of books from his personal collection, said it was party president Mallikarjun Kharge who first mooted the idea of having a library in Indira Bhavan and it was Sonia Gandhi who suggested that it be named after former prime minister Singh.

The party had a functional library when it was operating from 5-Rajendra Prasad Road, but after it shifted to 24 Akbar Road, the books were packed to an informal library, which some called a store room.

One of the sections in the library deals with Congress-related documents, including volumes of 'The Encyclopedia of the Indian National Congress' edited by party's librarian Abdul Moin Zaidi and his wife Shahida Gufran Zaidi. It contains reports on party affairs since its formation 1885 and includes minutes of Congress Working Committees. Another section has documentation of all the AICC Sessions between 1885-1993.

"Rahul Gandhi has suggested the digitisation of these records. We will soon be starting the work," Jairam Ramesh said.

Yogi warns against disruption of communal harmony

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Amid the ongoing controversy over "I love Muhammad' posters, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that any attempt to disrupt communal harmony in the state would be dealt with "an iron hand".

"Those dreaming of Ghazwa-e-Hindi (conquest of India) will get a ticket for hell," Adityanath said while speaking at a function in Balrampur in the state.

"Some people live in India but raise such slogans and encourage anti-national activities... all this will not be allowed on the Indian soil... we know how to deal with such elements," he added.

The chief minister, apparently referring to Friday's protests in Bareilly over the posters, said that faith should not be displayed on the streets. "Those doing so will be dealt with in the same way as we have dealt with the trouble mongers in Bareilly," he remarked.

Adityanath said that some people were also trying to ruin the future of the children by handing them posters of 'I love Muhammad'.

The police have arrested prominent Muslim cleric Maulana Touqir Raza, who had given the call for protest. Hundreds of unidentified people have been booked in connection with the violence.

According to sources, the state government is contemplating to invoke the stringent National Security Act against the cleric, who has been remanded to 14 days of judicial custody.

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The Power of Good

Self-styled Delhi godman apprehended

Chaitanyananda Saraswati was wanted for allegedly sexually harassing 17 women at his ashram

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Shah rejects Naxals' ceasefire offer P.8

CM orders relief measures in flood-hit north K'taka

BENGALURU, DHNS: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday instructed Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh and Kalaburagi DC Fauzia Tarannum to undertake necessary relief measures in the wake of a flood-like situation along the Krishna and Bhima rivers in north Karnataka.

Kalaburagi district has been receiving heavy rains and the situation was worsened by the excess water released from Ujani and Nira dams in Maharashtra.

Siddaramaiah directed the DC and the Zilla Panchayat CEO to visit flood-hit places and undertake relief works. He also asked the district in-charge secretary to visit the district immediately.

"The additional chief secretaries of the rural development and water resources departments should visit the area. Care should be taken while undertaking relief works to ensure that people and animals are not harmed," the chief minister added.

The CM will travel to Kalaburagi on Tuesday.

Siddaramaiah has also asked the DCs and the CEOs of Vijayapura, Bidar and Yadgir districts to take necessary measures.

FALLOUT FROM A TRAGEDY

- TVK moves Madurai Bench of Madras HC, seeks CBI or an SIT probe alleging possible conspiracy
- DMK govt seems to be proceeding with caution in the matter, as it involves a popular actor like Vijay
- CM Stalin dismisses demands for actor's arrest, saying any action will depend on outcome of probe by Aruna Jagadeesan
- Govt avoids naming Vijay and his close aide Aadhav Arjuna, son-in-law of lottery baron Santiago Martin, in the FIR

Stampede: Vijay's party seeks probe, cries conspiracy

TN govt under fire over security arrangements

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
KARUR (TN), DHNS

Relatives of the victims gather outside the mortuary of the government hospital in Karur. DH PHOTO/ETB SIVAPRIYAN

Actor-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) on Sunday moved the Madras High Court seeking a probe by the CBI or a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the Karur rally stampede alleging possible conspiracy.

The actor also announced a solatium of Rs 20 lakh each to the family of those who lost their lives as the death toll rose to 40. The DMK government seems to be proceeding with caution, as it involves a popular actor like Vijay, but is keen that he should not get any sympathy over the issue.

Chief Minister M K Stalin almost dismissed demands for the arrest of the actor, saying any action will depend on the outcome of the commission headed by retired justice Aruna Jagadeesan, even as questions are being raised on the role of his government in providing security for events.

The government has also avoided naming Vijay and his close aide Aadhav Arjuna, son-in-law of lottery baron Santiago Martin, in the FIR while including three TVK members from Karur (north).

While the entire political spectrum, from Stalin to Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami visited the Government Medical College Hospital in Karur, neither Vijay nor his party functionaries were present.

▸ Stampede, Page 4

Poor planning, delay blamed

Actor Vijay's delayed arrival by seven hours, inadequate planning and alleged lapses in security arrangements are being cited as the reasons for the tragedy in Karur that claimed 40 lives.
Details on Page 8

Boycott or not? No official BJP stand on caste survey

BENGALURU, DHNS: Following the high court's order not to make the ongoing social and educational survey compulsory, BJP leaders have taken different stands in the absence of an official decision.

While Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya has declared that he won't take part in the survey, BJP state president BY Vijayendra said on Sunday the party was yet to take a final decision on the matter.

Details on Page 3

Garba row: NRI couple leaves India

AHMEDABAD, DHNS: After facing backlash over a video showing them kissing while shooting a reel during a 'garba' event in Vadodara, an NRI couple left the country after submitting a written apology to the police.

Details on Page 8

KINGS OF THE WORLD, KINGS OF THE CONTINENT

After two no-contests, the India vs Pakistan Asia Cup title clash finally lived up to the hype with the Men In Blue scoring a thrilling five-wicket win in Dubai on Sunday

1 Chasing 147 for victory, India were in all sorts of trouble at 20/3 but the 22-year-old Tilak showed impeccable temperament in a high-stakes clash, smashing a 53-ball 69 not out to guide the Men In Blue home.

2 **Sanju Samson (24)** and **Shivam Dube (33)** too played wonderful cameos.

3 If India were chasing a below-par total, it was all thanks to the spin triumvirate of **Kuldeep Yadav (4/30)**, Varun Chakravarthy (2/30) and Axar Patel (2/26).

The two heroes on Sunday for India, who won a **9th Asia Cup trophy** in the T20 format, were **Tilak Varma** and **Kuldeep Yadav**

4 Pakistan were off to a blazing start with openers **Sahibzada Farhan (57)** and **Fakhar Zaman (46)** tearing into the Indians at the start.

5 But the moment **Kuldeep** dismissed Saim Ayub, **Pakistan** collapsed from 113/2 to **146 all out.**

6 Although he fumbled in the final, India owe their dominant display, where they went unbeaten, to opener **Abhishek Sharma's (314)** blistering knocks.

KULDEEP showed what a priceless commodity he is with 17 scalps in the series.

Report on Page 13

UDD officers' 'silence' in gas policy under Lokayukta lens

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka's City Gas Distribution (CGD) policy—which slashed pipeline installation charges from Rs 1,957 per metre to just Re 1—has come under the Lokayukta scanner as it is expected to cause losses to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore to local bodies across the state.

Five officers of the Urban Development Department (UDD), including one retired, have been asked to explain why they withheld their opinion before the policy was approved by the state Cabinet.

Acting on a complaint by Manjunath S, state vice-president of the Karnataka Rashtra Samiti, the Lokayukta's Additional Registrar (Enquiry) has directed the officers to submit objections and supporting documents by October 6, warning that non-compliance will invite "further action based on law".

> The decision to slash the installation charges is profiteering at public expense. The UDD's silence looks deliberate despite reminders, including one from CM's office.
>
> **Manjunath S**
> complainant

Notices have been served on Rakesh Singh, then Additional Chief Secretary (UDD), and his subordinates Tukaram Kalyankar (Deputy Secretary), Lakshmisagar NK (Under Secretary), Channakeshava (Section Officer, BBMP) and Hemant GR (Assistant). The notices were issued on the Lokayukta's orders.

At the centre of the controversy is the sharp reduction in permission and supervision charges, which complainants allege benefited private gas companies while depriving local bodies of crucial revenue.

Eight companies—Adani Total Gas Ltd, GAIL Gas Ltd, Megha Engineering, Indian Oil-Adani Gas Pvt Ltd, AGP City Gas Pvt Ltd, Bharat Gas Resources Ltd and others—are among the major beneficiaries.

Together, they were permitted to lay over 25,000 km of pipelines across the state, including Bengaluru.

▸ Gas policy, Page 4

Need to fix India: Top US trade official

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Amid the ongoing tariff tensions between India and the US, a top trade official in Washington on Sunday said India needs to open its market and stop taking actions that "harm America".

"We have a bunch of countries to fix, like Switzerland, Brazil, India — these are countries that need to really react correctly to America," US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said.

Lutnick said if countries like India and Brazil want to sell to American consumers, they must "play ball with the President of the United States".

The remarks came just a few days after an Indian delegation visited the US for trade talks.

QUICK ACTION

Bengaluru cops foil Rs 1-cr robbery bid in 15 mins

BENGALURU, DHNS

In a swift operation, the Bengaluru police on Saturday evening nabbed a gang of eight robbers who were looting a couple carrying around Rs 1 crore cash. The entire police operation—from response to arrest—was over in just 15 minutes, officials said.

Dramatic scenes unfolded at Akshaya Park, Akshayanagar, off Bannerghatta Road, around 6.15 pm when two men waylaid the couple and demanded to check their car for an "investigation".

The couple—real-estate dealer Mota Ram and his wife Lakshmi Devi—had gone there to hand over Rs 1.01 crore in cash to one Hemant for a property deal.

Hemant, a car driver, had come on the instructions of his employer Mohan—an arecanut trader from Tumakuru—to collect the money. He had reached the spot around 6 pm, and the couple followed 15 minutes later. Hemant conveyed his employer's instructions, and the couple showed him two cash-filled bags in their car.

Just then, two unknown men arrived there on a motorbike, tried to open the car's doors and questioned the couple. Claiming that they needed to "check" and "video-record" them, one of the men filmed the car and the cash. When questioned, they attacked Lakshmi and Hemant, and tried to snatch the bags. The trio—the couple and Hemant—somehow managed to drive off.

The suspects didn't give up. They tailed the car and rammed it from behind, forcing the victims to make a U-turn and stop near a deserted area.

▸ Bengaluru cops, Page 4

PROMISES DON'T LAPSE...
WHY SHOULD YOUR POLICY?
LIC of India launches Special Revival Campaign with concession in late fee.
Period 18/08/2025 to 17/10/2025
Hurry! Grab this opportunity.
An Opportunity to regain your insurance protection and continue enjoying its benefits.
Total Receivable Premium | % late fee concession | Maximum Concession allowed*
Up to ₹1,00,000 | 30% | ₹3000
From 1,00,001 to 3,00,000 | 30% | ₹4000
From 3,00,001 and above | 30% | ₹5000
*Terms & conditions apply
Policies can be revived within 5 years from the date of First Unpaid Premium as per plan Conditions.
Please contact nearest LIC Branch or Agent immediately. Stay Connected. Update your mobile number, email, NEFT and PAN with LIC
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BEWARE OF SPURIOUS PHONE CALLS AND FICTITIOUS / FRAUDULENT OFFERS. IRDAI or its officials do not involve in any activities of insurance business like selling insurance policies ,announcing bonus or investment of premiums, refund of amounts. Policyholders or the prospects receiving such phone calls are requested to lodge a police complaint. For more details on risk factors, terms and conditions, please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.
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GST Bachat Utsav
CBC 15502/13/0026/2526
MY BIKE IS NOW WITHIN MY BUDGET
FESTIVAL OF SAVINGS, SEASON OF JOY
SCOOTERS/BIKES UP TO 349CC ARE CHEAPER BY NEARLY ₹8,000
भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF BHARAT

Study: BWSSB revenue can rise by Rs 330 cr with fewer leaks

Also saves environmental and resource depletion costs

PLUG THE LEAK

Unaccounted for Water (UfW)	Revenue possible annually (in crore)
30%	1,564
20%	1,788
15%	1,899
10%	2,011
5%	2,123

UfW: Water lost due to leakages and illegal connections

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Reducing water leakages and losses by half could boost the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board's (BWSSB) revenue by about Rs 335 crore, a research paper published on IWA Publishing–Water Policy, the official journal of the World Water Council, has found.

The paper, titled 'Building Bengaluru's Water Future: Identifying Challenges and a Strategic Blueprint for Sustainable Management Open Access', also suggests policy and administrative measures to improve the board's financial health and efficiency.

Currently, Unaccounted for Water (UfW) — water lost due to leakages and illegal connections — is about 30%. If brought down to 5%, the BWSSB revenue could rise by nearly Rs 559 crore, the researchers said.

"Beyond the financial savings, UfW reduction also avoids the environmental and resource depletion costs associated with new water augmentation projects, making it a more sustainable and economically viable solution for water-scarce urban areas," the paper noted.

The calculations, however, are based on simplified assumptions and do not consider the rising marginal costs of further leakage reduction.

While BWSSB officials pointed to ongoing measures, the paper said the leakage scale calls for more comprehensive action.

"There have been efforts to mitigate some of these losses with regular maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, and advanced monitoring systems. However, the scale of leakage indicates a need for more comprehensive and innovative solutions to enhance the resilience and efficiency of the water supply network," it stated.

The paper recommended adopting advanced detection systems such as acoustic loggers, ground-penetrating radar, and satellite technology for accurate leak identification.

"Smart sensor installations on the network will allow real-time monitoring of flow and anomaly detection. Regular inspections can determine pipe health and detect potential problems early.

"Besides this, specialised rapid response teams must be deployed to plug leaks at the earliest, minimising wastage of water," the researchers suggested.

Board pushes phased plan to cut water loss

BENGALURU, DHNS: The BWSSB has drawn up an action plan to reduce Unaccounted for Water (UfW) in stages.

The project began in 2018 at a cost of Rs 600 crore and is now in its second phase, costing Rs 200 crore.

Ramprasat Manohar V

While officials agree UfW reduction has major benefits, they stress on phased implementation due to challenges on the ground.

BWSSB officials said that financial burden is one factor, but the larger concern is public inconvenience caused by the work.

"Leakages in old pipes laid 40–50 years ago are major contributors to UfW. However, replacement of such pipes can only be taken up in a phased manner as majority of them are in core areas of the city and digging up to replace the pipelines will result in traffic snarls and cause public inconvenience," said Ramprasat Manohar V, BWSSB Chairman.

There are nearly 3,000 km of old pipelines to be replaced.

The board is prioritising areas with high leakage.

"We are also working closely with the city corporations to ensure that all white-topping roads have utility ducts on the side so that in future we will not have to dig up the roads to replace or repair water or sanitary pipelines," Manohar added.

Artificial Intelligence

Officials are also exploring Artificial Intelligence to detect leakages and supply gaps.

"We have also cut down illegal connections and are forming a blue force to identify and prevent illegal connections," Manohar said.

WELCOMING THE GODDESS

The 75th Durga Pujo celebrations by the Bengalee Association at Halasuru, on Sunday, begins with Maha Shashthi, a moment of deep spiritual significance that represents the triumph of light over all that obscures. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Retd BDA employee, broker arrested in site forgery case

Plot was registered using fake papers, an impersonator

BENGALURU, DHNS

A retired Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) employee is among three people arrested for conspiring to fraudulently register a plot using fake documents and an impersonator.

The fraud surfaced when Lakshmi Devamma approached the BDA to transfer rights of a plot after the death of her husband, L Bylappa, on September 19, 2019.

Bylappa had originally been allotted a 40x60 site (No 2129) in Arkavathi Layout in 2006, which was later exchanged for a new site (No 1089) in Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout (NPKL Layout) in 2018.

On reviewing Devamma's application, BDA officials found that the NK Layout site had already been registered.

An inquiry revealed that a BDA employee, a real-estate broker, an impersonator N Bylappa posing as L Bylappa, his son, and a false witness named Devendra had created fake documents.

Using the impersonator, the group carried out a site cancellation and obtained a clean sale deed for the NK Layout property in 2018, cheating the rightful heir, Devamma.

Following a complaint by AP Kumar, Inspector of Police (Vigilance), BDA, the arrests were made.

The police arrested Chikkarai K, 68, the retired BDA assistant; broker Muralidhar, 60; and Manjunath B, 48, the son of N Bylappa, on September 23.

The Seshadripuram police registered a case under BNS sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 419 (cheating by personation), 420 (cheating), 465 (forgery), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using a forged document as genuine), and 120B (criminal conspiracy). Police have cautioned the public to remain vigilant against attempts to grab BDA sites using forged documents.

Traffic curbs on Sarjapur Road for two months

BENGALURU, DHNS: The police have announced traffic restrictions for Sarjapur Road for up to two months, starting Sunday, due to the white-topping work.

One of the roads, from Automart Junction to Agara Junction, will remain closed until the work is completed.

Vehicle users have been advised to take the Koramangala-Jakkasandra side towards Agara and the Outer Ring Road to avoid congestion.

Traffic from Agara and the Outer Ring Road (ORR) towards Jakkasandra and Koramangala will be restricted.

Vehicles coming towards Koramangala via the ORR can travel on the Agara flyover upper ramp, enter the service road, either at 19th Main Road Junction or the 14th Main Road upper ramp, proceed to 14th Main Road Junction, take a right turn, and continue towards the Automart side.

Caretaker arrested for stealing Rs 2.5-lakh gold chain

BENGALURU, DHNS: The RT Nagar police have arrested a caretaker for allegedly stealing a 26-gram gold chain worth Rs 2.5 lakh from an elderly man under her care.

The incident came to light after an employee from a healthcare centre in Kalyan Nagar filed a complaint with the RT Nagar police station on September 17.

The centre, which deploys caretakers across the city, reported that the woman had worked with the elderly man for about a month before leaving the job.

The complaint stated that the woman returned briefly on the morning of September 17, claiming to inform him about her sister's death in her village. While giving the elderly man a bath, she allegedly removed the gold chain from around his neck and left.

The RT Nagar police registered a theft case and began investigation. Acting on information from informants, they arrested the suspect on September 18 near the CBI bus stop on Ballari Road.

The police seized the gold chain from her possession. She was produced before the jurisdictional court on September 19 and remanded in judicial custody.

Car driver held for stealing gold from customer's house

BENGALURU, DHNS: A car driver was arrested for stealing 30 grams of gold ornaments worth Rs 3 lakh from a customer's residence in Ganesh Block.

The victim stated in her complaint that the driver had arrived at her house on August 26 to accompany her to her farm in Gandasi, Hassan district. She asked him to wait, removed her ornaments, and placed them on a television rack before going to bathe. On returning, she found both the ornaments and the driver missing.

Repeated calls to the driver went unanswered as his phone was switched off. A case of theft was registered at the Nandini Layout police station.

The police traced the suspect, Darshan KS, 34, near his residence in Annapoorneshwari Nagar. He was produced before the court on September 6 and remanded to police custody for five days.

Melted into a gold bar

During interrogation, Darshan admitted that he had taken the ornaments to a gold-melting shop, where they were melted into a bar and kept at his house.

On September 8, the police seized Darshan's car and the gold bar from his wife. The suspect was produced before the court later that day and remanded in judicial custody.

Sub-inspector suspended for releasing suspect without inquiry

BENGALURU, DHNS: A police sub-inspector has been suspended after he released a crime suspect without an inquiry.

The officer, posted at the High Grounds police station, released the suspect who was detained last week during a special drive.

The incident came to light when senior police officers found that the suspect was released without due procedure.

The matter was brought to the notice of senior officers, including the city police commissioner.

The officer was subsequently suspended for dereliction of duty.

A departmental inquiry is on against him.

New BMTC bus services from today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) will introduce the following bus services on Monday:

356-S: Anekal to Shivajinagar via Chandapura, Electronics City, Bommanahalli, Checkpost, Rajendra Nagar (Passport Office) and Austin Town. There will be four daily trips.

356-S: Chandapura to Shivajinagar via Electronics City, Bommanahalli, Checkpost, Rajendra Nagar (Passport Office) and Austin Town. There will be four daily trips.

Footpaths repaired, roads patched in central Bengaluru

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) on Sunday undertook a series of betterment works in the central division, including road cleaning and repairing broken footpaths.

In the Chamarajpet division, large-scale cleaning was carried out in and around KR Market in Ward 138 and along Mysuru Road.

Damaged footpaths along MG Road and Residency Road were repaired, while the main and adjoining roads were cleaned.

The GBA also filled potholes and completed patchworks on Richmond Road, Suranjan Das Road, Old Madras Road, Kamaraj Road, General KS Thimayya Road, Victoria Road, and Palace Road.

Officials said waste dumped on roads and footpaths was cleared, drains were cleaned, and debris and unused materials were removed from roadside areas.

Chiranjiv Singh, retired IAS officer; Darshan Kumar VY, Deputy Curator at National Gallery of Modern Art; and Prof RH Kulkarni, art historian from CKP, at the inauguration.

Miller Museum of Anamorphic Art opens in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Miller Museum of Anamorphic Art, the one of a kind in the world, was inaugurated on Carlston Road in Cooke Town on Sunday.

Cheryl Anita Miller, the museum's founder and director, said: "Anamorphic art is all about shifting perspectives. Artworks that appear distorted from one angle reveal their beauty when viewed from another. My mother Shereen Miller had introduced this concept in her own unique way. In her world, sight, sound, scent, touch and taste come alive."

The museum aims to spread creativity through anamorphic art, which is a unique blend of mathematics, science and artistic expression. The collection includes anamorphic paintings, surreal sculptures, stone works and digital art, she added.

Chiranjiv Singh, retired IAS officer; Darshan Kumar VY, Deputy Curator at the National Gallery of Modern Art; and Prof RH Kulkarni, art historian from Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, were in attendance.

Need a hand? Write to us

Letters of grievances are pouring in and we are doing our best to accommodate as many as possible. Readers may write in to highlight civic problems affecting their locality and we will help address them in an interactive and effective manner.

Grievances and issues related to public utility agencies such as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) would be highlighted in the weekly column. The writeups, which could be accompanied by photographs highlighting the problems, will be published on Mondays.

Mail your grievances to: peoplesproblems @deccanherald.co.in

Stray cattle menace in Vimanapura

I wish to bring to your notice the growing menace caused by stray cattle in our locality. Every day, especially during peak office hours, a herd of cows and bulls occupies the main road, blocking traffic and causing chaos for commuters. This not only delays movement, but also poses a serious risk of accidents.

In addition, the cattle rummage through roadside garbage, scattering waste all over the streets. This makes the area unhygienic and attracts more animals and stray dogs, further worsening the situation.

We request the authorities concerned to take immediate action by ensuring proper garbage management and controlling the movement of stray cattle on busy roads.

Suja Abraham
Vinayaka Nagar, Vimanapura

Stray animals pose risks by causing traffic accidents and creating sanitation issues.

Rampant rat menace in AECS Layout

AECS Layout in Kundalahalli, a rapidly growing ward in the IT hub, is currently facing a severe rat infestation. The primary cause of this menace appears to be rapid urbanisation, ongoing construction that creates ideal breeding grounds in unfinished sites, and poor waste management.

As a result, the rat population has increased dramatically. They are digging holes, chewing up sewage pipes, and getting into vehicles to chew on electrical and fuel wires. This rampant rat issue also poses a significant health hazard to citizens.

Under these circumstances, the BBMP is requested to address this issue with urgency.

HVK Bhatta
AECS Layout, Kundalahalli

BMTC driver's inhumane behaviour

On September 10, heavy rains had left most of us tired, hungry and drenched while waiting for a bus to take us home. A blue electric 300H bus arrived around 9.30 pm at the Ramamurthy Nagar bridge stop, headed towards Maruthiseva Nagar. The bus was almost empty.

Seniors, men and women waiting at the bus stop were close to the rear door waiting to board, but it was not opened, so we all naturally moved towards the front door, which was open. Unprovoked, the driver yelled at us in a brutish manner and chased us, including seniors and women, toward the rear door, which he then opened.

This kind of brutish behavior and insensitivity from a public servant should be tamed at all costs. There must be regular training and sensitisation programmes for the crew in dealing with the public under various situations. These brutes must be constantly reminded that it is the common man who is feeding them.

Francis Doss

Water unit on footpath in KB Sandra

The BBMP is illegally constructing a drinking water booth on the footpath of Dr Ambedkar Medical College Hospital Road, despite objections and multiple complaints. Not only have they completely encroached upon the footpath, but they have also taken up 3-4 feet of the main road, dangerously forcing pedestrians onto the path of speeding traffic, especially ambulances.

This illegal structure is not only a traffic hazard, but also a danger to residents as it is situated right next to a transformer.

This illegal structure is not only a traffic hazard, but also a danger to residents as it is situated right next to a transformer.

I hope the BBMP will follow its rules and prioritise public safety by honouring the court order, which ensures the protection of life and does not violate Article 21. Bescom and BWSSB are liable for negligence and contempt as it is their duty to decline connections to illegalities, as per court orders.

I hope the authorities shift this booth to the available government land just a few meters away (at the junction of Dr Ambedkar Medical College Hospital Main Road and LR Bande Main Road) or to the BBMP park in LR Bande (adjacent to the Government Housing Quarters) or the KB Sandra bus depot.

J Rebello
Kaval Byrasandra

IN THE CITY

GENERAL

Walkathon: Gopalaiah, Jessie Marilyn, Dr Sridhar, Yogesh P to attend; St Teresa Tathagat Heart Centre, Rajajinagar; 8 am.

CULTURAL

Solo exhibition: Wooday P Krishna, Indumathi Bhaskar to attend; Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Kumarakrupa Road; 5.30 pm.

Dasara puppet show: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Race Course Road; 11 am.

Drama: 'Mysuru Mallige'; Organised by Yuvaka Sangha; Yuvapatha, 4th Block, Jayanagar; 5.45 pm.

Invites to be published in this column should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

CITY WEATHER

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with light rain

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	28.0°C
Minimum	20.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	69%
Sunset (Sep 29)	6:12 pm
Sunrise (Sep 30)	6:09 am
Moonrise	11:16 am
Moonset	10:42 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Socio-edu survey: 27 lakh houses enumerated after first week

BENGALURU, DHNS: As many as 27.27 lakh households were enumerated across the state after one week of the ongoing Social and Educational survey (popularly called caste census).

A total of as 12.73 lakh houses were enumerated on Sunday. The survey, scheduled from September 22 to October 07, began slowly due to technical glitches and administrative hassles. Only 4.68 lakh households were enumerated at the end of five days.

There are 1.43 crore families in the state. Thus, the survey will have to cover nearly 1.16 crore families in the remaining nine days.

However, it picked pace after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met with deputy commissioners and Zilla Panchayat chief executive officers of respective districts. As a result, the survey achieved nearly 20 lakh enumerations on Friday and Saturday.

According to sources in the Backward Classes Commission, the enumeration picked up as technical problems had been fixed, and more enumerators had entered the field.

There are 1.43 crore families in the state. Thus, the survey will have to cover nearly 1.16 crore families in the remaining nine days.

The ongoing exercise is the second socio-educational survey to be undertaken in the state. In 2015, during Siddaramaiah's first term as chief minister, the H Kantharaj-led Backward Classes Commission had conducted a similar survey. The report submitted by the Jayaprakash Hegde-led commission based on the 2015 survey was set aside by the state government in June 2025.

Boycott or selective participation: Lack of clarity clouds BJP's stance

'Mention as Hindu, don't give income details, you may lose ration cards'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Following the High Court's order not to make the ongoing social and educational survey compulsory, BJP leaders have taken different stands, in the absence of an official stand by the party.

The previous socio-educational survey was conducted in 2015 by the H Kantharaj-led backward classes commission during Siddaramaiah's first term as chief minister.

The 'dominant' Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities had called the survey 'unscientific' and claimed that their numbers were 'undercounted'.

On Saturday, Bangalore South MP L S Tejasvi Surya had declared that he wouldn't take part in the survey.

"This (survey) won't help any caste or the poor. So, please, boycott this caste census or Siddaramaiah census. The HC has allowed us to do that," Surya, a Brahmin, had said.

Questioning the intent and execution of the ongoing exercise, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra on Sunday said the party was yet to take a final decision on whether to boycott the survey.

However, he said all Hindu communities — Veerashaiva-Lingayats, Vokkaligas, Dalits, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) — should uniformly declare themselves as 'Hindu' in religion column.

Vijayendra told reporters here, "We haven't taken any decision. All party leaders are discussing it. Last week, we held a two-day workshop of people's representatives, where we took a clear stand that we should mention religion as Hindu".

He stressed the importance of unity and consistency in religious identity among Hindu communities. "It is our collective responsibility," the state BJP president said.

Explaining that participating in the survey was voluntary, Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka charged that the survey was being falsely presented as a socio-educational initiative.

"This is not a socio-educational survey. This is Siddaramaiah's caste survey. It's a survey to label people. It's not about data or development; it's about budget cuts and vote bank politics," he said.

He cautioned citizens against providing personal information, especially financial details, urging that people only answer questions they deem appropriate.

Accusing the Congress government of financial mismanagement, Ashoka said the caste survey was being used as a pretext to cancel ration cards and cut welfare schemes.

"There is no money in treasury. By collecting details about people's income, they may remove some ration card holders from the list. For that, they need criteria. This caste survey is being done for that reason and to cut schemes. Preparation for the upcoming budget has become a headache for CM Siddaramaiah. They need to save money for that. This survey is being used as a tool to reduce government expenditure," he said.

Ashoka added that the survey was politically motivated and not genuinely about data collection or development.

Karkala MLA V Sunil Kumar, an OBC (Ediga) leader in BJP, said people could selectively answer the 60 questions in the questionnaire. While clarifying that participating in the survey was left to the discretion of the people, Kumar requested those participating to mention themselves as Hindus.

"Though the BJP had earlier opposed this exercise at the state level, it has committed to a caste census at the central level, which these people cannot oppose. But they are not very clear on how to save their face. Thus, we are witnessing this indecisiveness," said political analyst Harish Ramaswamy.

Skywalk collapses after truck rams into it

KOLAR, DHNS: A skywalk on the Bengaluru-Tirupati stretch of NH-75 collapsed after a truck crashed into it here on Saturday night. The accident resulted in a 3-km traffic jam on the busy road. One half of the broken skywalk fell on the truck and another half on the road. Two trucks and car were damaged in the incident. However, there was no loss of lives. Local residents informed Kolar Rural Police. As the traffic congestion worsened, police brought cranes to the spot and removed the broken pieces of skywalk. Passengers were stuck in the traffic for two hours.

HC refuses to quash FIR against dismissed cop accused of extorting govt officials

BENGALURU, DHNS: The High Court of Karnataka has dismissed a petition filed by Ningappa Savant, a dismissed police constable from Chitradurga, seeking to set aside the FIR registered against him for using the names of officials in the Lokayukta for extorting government officials.

The FIR stated that Ningappa would threaten and extort government officials by calling them from newly bought sim cards with display pictures (DP) of Lokayukta, Upalokayukta and other Lokayukta police officers whose names would also appear in the Truecaller app.

"Merely because the petitioner, who was a non-public servant, is alone sought to be shown as an accused in the FIR at the very inception and initial stage, the said circumstance cannot be made the basis to interfere with the impugned FIR and prevent the investigation from being conducted by the respondent Lokayukta police," Justice S R Krishna Kumar said.

Pursuant to a complaint on May 30, 2025, in regard to extortion, a Lokayukta police inspector submitted a report on June 2, 2025, confirming the allegations.

An FIR was registered against Ningappa under sections 7(a) and 7A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act. The Lokayukta police argued that the police inspector's report on June 2, 2025, was a mere preliminary inquiry report and not a detailed investigation report as contended by the petitioner.

After perusing the complaint and report, the court said that both indicate that the information is said to have been from several government officials to the effect that they had received telephone calls informing them that there is a likelihood of a raid or trap or other proceedings and bribe was demanded again and again in order to avoid such raids/cases.

Several government officers have fallen prey to such telephone calls and paid bribes in thousands/lakhs in cash or through phones, the court noted as stated in the police report.

"In the instant case, the complaint and report prima facie contain all necessary ingredients constituting the offences alleged against the petitioner and in the light of the aims and objects of the PC Act, in particular, incorporation/insertion of Section 7A of the PC Act relating to even non-public servants such as the petitioner vide the Amendment Act 2018, I am of the considered opinion that the question of quashing the impugned FIR and thereby preventing/scuttling/interfering with the investigation would not arise in the facts and circumstances of the instant case," Justice Kumar said.

The court further said that it is always open for the Lokayukta police to identify and include other accused persons, as provided under CrPC section 173, including public servants in the FIR and also include additional provisions such as sections 7, 8, 12 of the PC Act.

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Transcend politics, promote art, says Vijayendra

BENGALURU, DHNS: Emphasising the transformative power of art and culture in the political arena, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra on Sunday underscored the need for nurturing art, culture, and music by rising above political divide. He was speaking at 100th "Masada Madhurya," a cultural initiative of the Karnataka BJP.

The programme began with a collective viewing of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat'. Vijayendra praised Modi's leadership style, noting, "Modiji always calls himself the servant of the nation."

Lauding the 'Masada Madhurya' initiative, Vijayendra said that Jagannath Bhavan (BJP headquarters) is more than just a political hub and is a a vital centre dedicated to preserving and promoting tradition, culture, and heritage.

Expressing pride in leading the state BJP during the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) centenary celebrations, Vijayendra pledged unwavering support to the Madhurya team and their continued efforts.

In his address during the valedictory ceremony, BJP National General Secretary (Organisation) B L Santosh stated that the "Masada Madhurya" was launched with the vision of utilising Jagannatha Bhavan for public and cultural activities.

He acknowledged the efforts of Ganesh Yaji and Dattaguru Hegde, who ensured the uninterrupted conduct of the programmes. Santosh said that the Bhavan's intimate atmosphere—stemming from its vibrant art and cultural activities—creates a warm and welcoming environment. He also expressed gratitude to the local community for their pivotal role in the programme's success. The event was attended by several dignitaries and BJP leaders.

KSRTC wins awards

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) said it had won national recognition in nine categories at the 15th Global Communication Conclave and Excellence Awards 2025, organised by Public Relations Council of India. The KSRTC won gold in Digital Media Innovation and House Journal Print (Regional), silver in Healthcare Communication Films, bronze for a Unique HR Initiative, and awards in Customer Service Excellence, Website and Microsite, Corporate Films, Marketing Campaign, and Internal Communication Campaign categories.

Panel rejects plan to electrify villages in Kudremukh forests

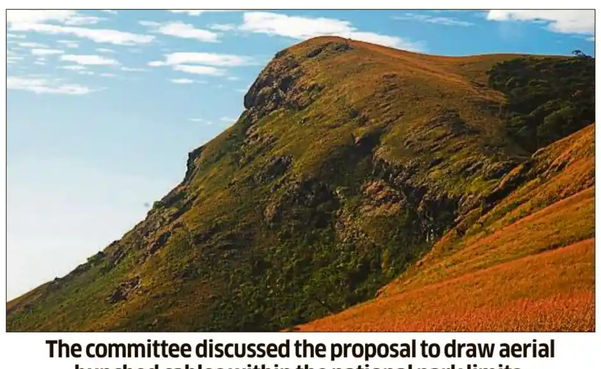
It impedes creation of inviolate areas: Wildlife board committee

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The standing committee of the state board for wildlife has rejected proposals to provide electricity to seven enclosure villages located within the limits of the Kudremukh National Park, stating that such a measure at a time of efforts to shift people outside the protected area will impede creation of inviolate areas.

The standing committee of the state board of wildlife was looking into five proposals for drawing an 11 KV transmission line into five enclosures. These included Emmegundi, Yadagaaru and Horane enclosures in Sringeri taluk of Chikkamagaluru district. In Udupi, the enclosures were spread over Hebri (Tinglemakki and Moorantebailu) and Karkala taluks (Kanyalu-Iddu and Barkala).

The committee discussed the proposal to draw aerial bunched cables within the national park limits. The member-secretary of the board pointed out to the site inspection report by the deputy conservator of forests, Kudremukh Wildlife Division.



The committee discussed the proposal to draw aerial bunched cables within the national park limits.

"Providing basic infrastructure such as electricity lines in rural areas can help build trust in the department among the local residents. However, a resettlement and rehabilitation programme is currently being implemented in Kudremukh National Park and some families have submitted applications seeking compensation, which are under evaluation. Therefore, at this stage, providing electricity in these areas may hinder the state government's objective of designating these areas for wildlife conservation," the report stated.

Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre, who chaired the meeting, sought to know how many families would benefit from the electrification work. "It was replied that each of the proposals would serve few families only," the minutes of the meeting stated.

The committee decided not to recommend the transmission lines and directed the department to submit the details of the rehabilitation instead. At the same time, the committee advised the agency, Mangalore Electricity Supply Company, to submit fresh proposals for underground transmission lines, if there are an adequate number of beneficiaries for a particular project.

Firm seeks to look for bauxite in 1,100-acre forest in Honnavar

BENGALURU, DHNS

Days after *DH* reported on a Bengaluru firm seeking to drill holes in Kenchanahalli of Chikkamagaluru to explore gold, a Maharashtra-based company has now sought to explore bauxite ore in 1,087 acres of forest land in Honnavar, close to the newly declared Apsarakonda sanctuary.

PRB Infraprojects Pvt Ltd, a company based in Nagpur, has sought clearances to drill 25 boreholes and 25 pits in the Nittadgi block in the forests of Honnavar division.

The total cost of the project is estimated at about Rs 1.4 crore. Bauxite is a key mineral required in the making of aluminum.

The move comes months after a technical committee under the union ministry of mines approved the exploration proposal earlier this year.

The company in March submitted an offline request to the deputy conservator of forests, Honnavar division, for preliminary survey.

Fragile & sensitive area

About 2.5 km of the northern boundary of the area exploration site is located about 200-300 metres from the Sharavathi river. Marine life is already seeing pressure from increasing commercial activities, illegal sand mining as well as waste dumped in the name of tourism.

Sources in the department said that the Honnavar division had gone through the proposal and sent a detailed request. However, at the time, the government had not yet declared the Apsarakonda marine sanctuary, the first attempt by the state government to protect whales, dolphins, sharks as well as lesser known marine life.

In June, the government declared Apsarakonda-Mugali sanctuary, bringing protection to about 1,000 hectares of land adjoining the sea. Researchers who studied the area have also highlighted the rich flora of the area.

To a question on the impact on the new sanctuary, Honnavar deputy conservator of forests Yogeesha C K said the matter was being assessed.

"Our field officers are going to submit a report on the matter, which will help establish details about the site's proximity to any protected area. I am going to visit the site to assess the situation before submitting the report," he told *DH*.

Ministry seeks report as NGO flags violations in widening NH 169

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has asked the state government to look into a complaint regarding the violation of the law in the widening of a stretch of national highway (NH 169) in the eco sensitive zone (ESZ) of the Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary.

The complaint by Shivamogga-based NGO Green Lives alleges that National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) had misled the forest department by stating that no wildlife sanctuary of ESZ falls within the alignment of their work. However, as per the ESZ notification of Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary about 4 km stretch falls within the ESZ.

In February, the Deputy Conservator of Forest, Shivamogga, inspected the site and gave a report that the the widening of the road from chaining of 15.98 km to 26.69 km involves use of forest as well as non-forest area while the work in the chainage of 26.7 km to 30.75 km inside the ESZ involves only resurfacing of the road.

The NGO said the agency started work without applying for permission from ESZ monitoring committee. They said while the DCF report said the NHAI was "resurfacing" the road, the before and after photos show soil excavation of "thousands of loads" for road strengthening.

"The user agency has expressly admitted that work was undertaken within the ESZ. Despite this clear admission, the committee proceeded to accept the road widening proposal and granted permission with certain conditions - conditions that have already been violated," it said.

To a question, Kudremukh Wildlife Division DCF Sivaram Babu said the decisions were taken as per the rule. "Decisions in this matter were taken by the monitoring committee headed by the regional commissioner," he said. Meanwhile, the NGO has urged the Union ministry to reject the work proposal submitted by the NHAI.

Bidadi township project: HDK throws down gauntlet at DKS

'Not an inch of farmers' land will be allowed to be taken for project'

NEW DELHI, DHNS:

Slamming Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on the proposed Bidadi township project, Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy on Sunday said that not an inch of farmers' land would be allowed to be taken for the project.

Addressing a massive protest rally organised by farmers of Bidadi, via video conference from Delhi, he said that the deputy CM was spreading false news that the township was proposed by former prime minister H D Deve Gowda.

"It is deeply disturbing that the very person who has repeatedly exploited the land of the poor and farmers is now hurling frivolous charges against me. As a farmer myself, I have built my life in Bidadi. Unlike him, I have not built schools, colleges or high-rise complexes on land taken away from the poor," Kumaraswamy said.

The JD(S) leader alleged that Shivakumar had encroached upon land acquired around Hosakerehalli (in Bengaluru) for the NICE road project, as well as large tracts of land taken during S M Krishna's tenure as chief minister under the Bengaluru–Mysuru expressway plan.

"It has been more than 20 years, yet no road has been built. That land is now being misused. By contrast, when I was chief minister, work on the highway progressed swiftly. Compensation was promptly given to farmers who lost land," he said.

"Farmers need not fear. On the pretext of a township, fertile lands are being snatched. This will not be allowed," he said, adding that he would extend full support to the farmers' agitation.

"I will personally come and join the protests. For the sake of farmers, I am willing to put aside concerns about my health. Let us see who dares to forcibly acquire land," the former CM said.

He said the government claimed that 3,000 to 4,000 acres out of 9,000 acres (meant for the project) were owned by it. But in reality, only 700 acres belong to the government.

"These false figures are being used to justify the township project and loot farmers' land," Kumaraswamy said.

Waring government officers, particularly police, who have been pressuring farmers, he said,

"You are making a mistake and you will face the consequences. For your actions, you may even face imprisonment. This government has only two years left. I know what will happen after that. Do not harass farmers simply because someone has ordered you to".

H D KUMARASWAMY
Union Minister

"You are making a mistake and you will face the consequences. For your actions, you may even face imprisonment. This government has only two years left. I know what will happen after that. Do not harass farmers simply because someone has ordered you to.

'FUR'EVER FAMILY

Canines of various breeds take part in the Dog Show organised as part of Dasara celebrations in Mysuru on Sunday. DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGH T

MoEF panel tells windmill firm to cough up penalty for violation

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Sending a strong message against violation of the forest laws, an expert committee under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has directed the state government to impose full penalty on a wind energy company in Chitradurga, which had sought concession.

The project involved setting up of nearly 100 windmills in the 548.07 acre (221.80 hectare) of forest land in Jogimatti and Marikanive reserve forests. The project was approved in April 2003 in favour of a private company Enercon, later taken over by Wind World Ltd. However, it was found that over 112 acres of forest other than the 548 acres were cleared for the project. In addition, 87 acres within the lease area was utilised in violation of the land use.

Last year, the then principal chief conservator of forests (Head of Forest Force) had recommended the renewal along with a penalty against the company. The penalty totals to net present value (NPV) of the land diverted by the company in violation of the law. The NPV, introduced in 2002 to fund compensatory afforestation, fixes a tariff for diversion of forests depending on the ecological class and other parameters.

The company had cited a Supreme Court order to request a concession of 50% of the NPV. The state government, which recommended the project, had then moved the matter of penalty to the Forest Advisory Committee. The committee, however, noted that the guidelines regarding levying of penal provisions do not mention charging of 50% penal NPV. Instead, the penalty is prescribed as the amount equivalent to the NPV of the forest land.

The committee, after a detailed discussion, noted that in the extant case, violation has been proved on account of deviation from the approval granted by the ministry.

"In view of the existing provisions of the guidelines, the penal NPV should be considered at full NPV of the forest land used in violation and should accordingly be charged for forest area used in violation of the conditions stipulated," it said.

Sources in the department said that direction essentially means that the company wlll now pay full NPV of the forest extent which bore the violations and an additional 100% of the NPV as penalty.

To a question, Chitradurga Deputy Conservator of Forests Gopya Nayak G said the process of fixing the NPV will begin soon. "The company has to submit a request following which the process will begin at the forest clearance division," he said.

GOPYA NAYAK G
Conservator of Forests

"The company has to submit a request following which the process will begin at the forest clearance division.

No action against officers

Interestingly, in May 2025, the MoEF&CC had directed the state government to take strict action against senior officers of the Karnataka Forest Department who aided the illegal operation of the wind mills.

The measure came after it was revealed that the then Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Head of Forest Force), had issued an order for continuing of the windmills in July 2020, when the application for renewal was not accepted at the time.

"The regional office shall initiate action under section 3B read with 3A of the Van Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan Adhiniyam, 1980, as applicable officials responsible for allowing the operation of the windmills after expiry of Stage-II approval without prior approval of the government of India," the May 2025 letter from MoEF said. However, sources said the state government has not initiated action despite the directions.

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Siltation brings down Almatti dam's storage capacity by 7.55 tmcft: Study

ALMATTI (BAGALKOT DIST), DHNS: A study by Karnataka Engineering Research Station (KERS) in 2023 has revealed a significant loss of storage capacity in Almatti reservoir, the lifeline of undivided Vijayapura and Kalyana Karnataka districts, due to siltation.

According to KERS, the Almatti dam has accumulated 7.556 tmcft of silt bringing down the water holding capacity of the reservoir to 115.552 tmcft as against its maximum storage of 123.081 tmcft.

The KERS, in a report to the state government, has claimed that the water holding capacity of Almatti dam has gone down by 6.1% since its commissioning over two decades ago.

A file photo of a boat fitted with echo sound machine being brought to the backwaters of Almatti reservoir for a study on silt accumulation.

According to K G Mahesh, director, KERS, "The study was conducted on 487 sq km covering the backwaters of Almatti reservoir to Hippargi barrage for three months. Explaining about the methodology, the KERS director said, Sound waves were sent to the bottom of the reservoir from an echo sound system machine fitted to a boat. Based on the echo, the quantum of silt deposition can be measured using software uploaded in the machine. The data extracted by the machine was analysed and a report on the same was submitted to the government," he said.

Meanwhile, Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Limited (KBJNL) officials have claimed that there won't be any water shortage for irrigation and power generation, even if the storage capacity drops to 115.55 tmcft.

The Narayanpur dam, built across Krishna river downstream of Almatti dam, has highest accumulation of silt at 10.550 tmcft across all dams in state, a study in 2022 said.

The deposition of sediments has brought down the storage capacity of the dam to 27.292 tmcft.

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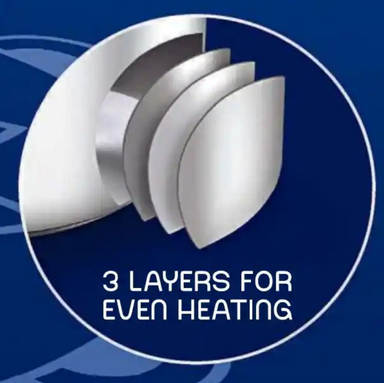

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UDD officers' role in gas policy under lens

Gas policy, from Page 1

Documents show that the UDD had fixed installation charges of Rs 1,857 per metre and Rs 100 for supervision (Rs 1,957 per metre in total) in 2020.

As a result, different government entities, including the now-dissolved Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), had earned Rs 281.68 crore for permitting pipelines totalling over 4,630 km. After the new policy, revenue saw a dramatic decline to just Rs 20.56 lakh despite allowing 1,136 km of pipeline permissions.

The complaint alleges that despite warnings from the Public Works Department (PWD) about "serious revenue implications", the UDD did not file its opinion, allowing the Cabinet to approve the policy. Files indicate objections raised in October 2022 and January 2023 remained pending for over 60 days just in the UDD.

"The decision to slash the installation charges is profiteering at public expense," said Manjunath S, the complainant. "The UDD's silence looks deliberate despite reminders, including one from the CM's office." Interestingly, the policy had been deferred twice during the BJP's tenure but was approved within months of the Congress government taking office. At the time of approval, the government had instructed the companies to pass on the benefit to end consumers by reducing the cost of PNG and CNG.

A gas network representative defended the policy, saying it aims to promote investment in the state, provide clean and green fuel for households and automobiles, and foster sustainable industrial growth. "While the government may have lost installation revenue, it benefits from recurring tax revenue and broader social gains," the representative added.

'BEYOND B'LURU' BEARS FRUIT

Incubation centres kickstart startup ecosystem in Hubballi-Dharwad

ARUNKUMAR HURALIMATH
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Over the last 13 years, Hubballi-Dharwad has witnessed the rise of eight incubation centres that have mentored around 1,000 startups, including 172 which continue to function from these facilities.

Since 2012, both government-funded and private institutions have set up incubation centres with an aim to encourage entrepreneurship among students and young professionals.

With many agriculture-based and information technology-driven start-ups mushrooming in the state's second biggest city, several students from north and central Karnataka are finding jobs at these start-ups.

At least four of the start-ups that took birth here have gone on to record an annual turnover of over Rs 100 crore.

According to Vinayak Hosamani, additional director of KLE-Centre for Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which was among the first to start an incubation centre here, says along with central and state governments, even private firms have started several schemes to fund startups.

"In tier-two cities like Hubballi-Dharwad, we need a strong ecosystem that not only encourages startups, but also attracts industries to the region," he says.

Elevate programme, an initiative of the Karnataka Innovative and Technology Society (KITS) of the department of electronics, IT and BT which identifies promising startups and helps them through funding or mentorship at various stages, has also benefited the budding entrepreneurs.

Under Elevate-100 programme, 69 startups in the twin cities over the last five years have received Rs 15.39 crore.

The dhaRti incubation centre at IIT-Dharwad. DH FILE PHOTO

A senior officer at KITS says the incubation centers in the twin cities have been working towards strengthening the startup ecosystem.

"A good number of start-ups and big companies have already set up shop in Hubballi," the officer said.

DocketRun Tech founder Ajay Kabadi said his IT solutions were being used at several big firms including Tata and JSW.

He said like many budding engineers, his dream was to get a placement in one of the MNCs.

However, after participating in one of the programmes regarding startups, he realized that it was better to become an employer than an employee.

"Hubballi is an ideal place for startups as it has less traffic congestion and cost of production is comparatively less. While my products are manufactured here, my sales teams in Bengaluru, Pune and other places are helping me expand the business," he said.

Huchcha Reddi of Raichur, who has been working in a startup for the last six years, says compared to metro cities, the cost of living in Hubballi is less and it is nearer to his hometown.

Hubballi-Dharwad central MLA Mahesh Tenginkai said while the region was Karnataka's second largest city in terms of area and population, it did not yet have large-scale industries. As a result, many young people migrate to metropolitan cities in search of jobs.

"If industries are set up here and startups are given the necessary funding, youth will come forward to start their own businesses and provide employment opportunities within the region," he said.

IT Minister Priyank Kharge said that during his earlier tenure as IT Minister in 2017, he had taken measures to encourage start-ups beyond Bengaluru.

"Now, the results are visible in Hubballi. Karnataka's IT exports stand at Rs 4.5 lakh crore, of which Hubballi-Dharwad contributes Rs 3,500 crore and Belagavi Rs 3,000 crore," he said.

He said it took 35 years for Bengaluru to grow as an IT hub. Similarly, it will take time for other cities to build their own ecosystems.

"With the Beyond Bengaluru programme, the focus is on retaining local talent and creating employment opportunities. Karnataka already has policies and schemes in place, success depends on all stakeholders working together," he said.

Incubation centres in state's 'second IT capital' at:

- KLE Centre for Technology Innovation & Entrepreneurship (KLE-CTIE)
- Deshpande Startups
- IBMR Business School
- University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) Dharwad
- SDM College of Engineering & Technology (SDMCET)
- Indian Institute of Information Technology, Dharwad
- Indian Institute of Technology, Dharwad
- Dharwad Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (DIMHANS) - yet to start functioning

Vijay's party seeks CBI probe over stampede

Stampede, from Page 1

Over 50 people are still receiving treatment, of which only two are said to be critical.

Vijay, who left the textile town for Chennai after the tragedy, posted a statement on his X page condoling the deaths.

The DMK government headed by Stalin also came under all-round attack from Opposition parties which sought to know why adequate police protection was not given to the rally as Vijay had been drawing huge crowds in his previous public engagements.

As the party came under severe criticism for its poor handling of crowds and its silence on Saturday's incident, the TVK approached the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court seeking a CBI or an SIT probe into the incident alleging possible conspiracy. "The petition will be taken up for hearing on Monday," TVK leader Nirmal Kumar added.

Swinging into a damage control exercise, the Jagadeesan commission began its probe into the incident on Sunday. The government also fielded ADGP (Law and Order) Davidson Devasirvatham to rule out "intelligence failure" and "lapses" on the part of the police and blamed Vijay for coming late for the rally.

Explaining the events that unfolded on Saturday evening, Devasirvatham said the police, sensing that the crowd was huge, asked organisers of the event to stop the vehicle at least 50 meters before the designated point.

"However, they insisted that they go further inside to the point where they had planned. For 10 minutes, the TVK leader didn't come out of the bus, making the crowd restless," he added.

A top government official said the TVK sought permission only for 10,000 people but mobilised about 25,000 people. "The political party concerned didn't make enough arrangements for people like drinking water. They didn't follow the conditions laid down by the police as well. If they had expected more people to attend the rally, they should have told us so that we could arrange additional security," the official told *DH*.

Bengaluru cops foil Rs 1-cr robbery...

Bengaluru cops, from Page 1

Hemant and Ram were then forced out of the car, while Lakshmi remained seated inside with the bags.

One of the suspects attacked Hemant again, and was joined by four of his accomplices. The gang dragged the trio into a shed at the vacant site, seized their phones and demanded Rs 10 lakh to let them go.

One of the men gave Hemant a mobile phone, asking him to contact his boss Mohan and arrange the money. When he refused, the gang confined them for nearly two hours. Hemant later agreed to call his boss Mohan, and quickly told him what had happened.

Mohan immediately contacted the Subramanyapura Assistant Commissioner of Police, who then alerted Joint Commissioner of Police (East) Ramesh Banoth.

Subsequently, Hulimavu police inspector BG Kumaraswamy was alerted. Coincidentally, he and his team were at the nearby DLF Junction on an area-domination exercise. They rushed to the vacant plot, nabbed all the suspects, rescued the victims and recovered the cash — all within 15 minutes.

The arrested suspects are Narasimha, 34, a car driver from JP Nagar; Jeevan, 27, a gym trainer from Begur; Kishore M, 30, a labourer from Anekal; Venkataraju, 28, a waterboy from Anekal; Chandiran, 33, an auto driver from Kalasipalya; Kumar N, 36, a security guard from Anekal; Ravi Kiran, 33, a security guard from Begur; and Naman, 18, a milk seller from Yelenahalli.

Police suspect the dacoits had inside information about the property deal and are seeking their custody for further investigation.

Flood fury continues unabated in Bhima basin districts

Massive discharges from Maha dams leave several villages marooned

BENGALURU, DHNS

Residents are shifted on a coracle after the waters of River Bhima marooned Kobala village of Jewargi taluk in Kalaburagi district. DH PHOTO/TAJUDDIN AZAD

The swollen Manjra river has submerged vast tracts of agricultural lands near Kongali in Hulsoor taluk of Bidar district. DH PHOTO/GURUPRASAD MENTE

Heavy rainfall, coupled with swollen rivers, continued to affect normal life in Bhima river basin districts. Kalaburagi, Bidar and Yadgir continued to reel under massive discharges from various reservoirs and barrages from Maharashtra, including Ujani and Sina.

The swollen Bhima and Manjra rivers have turned scores of villages into islands. More than 8,000 people from the flood affected villages in Kalaburagi and Yadgir have been moved to gruel centres by Sunday evening.

The vehicular traffic on National Highway 50 was closed for a second consecutive day on Sunday following the submergence of bridges across Bhima near Kattisangavi and Khani villages. Thousands of vehicles, mostly lorries, are stranded at the entrance of the bridges.

The SDRF and the Fire and Emergency Services personnel rescued hundreds of the affected villagers from Mandarwad, Kobal, Koodi Dargah and Kon Hippargi in Jewargi taluk, and Saradagi, Firozabad, Hagaragundagi in Kalaburagi taluks. Kadaburu village in Chittapur taluk has been completely submerged. A NDRF team has been stationed at Wadi.

The traffic on National Highway 150 has been prohibited as a bridge has gone under flood waters near Yadgir. The vehicles plying on Kalaburagi-Yadgir-Narayanpet (Telangana) have been diverted to an interior route. The Yadgir-Shahapur road has also been closed for traffic due to flooding. Because of which at least 12 villages near Naikal have been cut-off.

Bhima river has meandered through Yadgir city, inundating several residential areas and the district stadium.

More than 20 villages in Hulsoor, Kamalnagar and Aurad taluks of Bidar district have been cut-off, courtesy the swollen Manjra river. Kongali village has been turned into an island.

With the bridges on Shrimali-Yellamawadi, Sangam-Thana Kushnoor and Sangam-Khed going under Manjra, the Bhalki-Humnabad-Basavakalyan road has been closed for traffic.

Spl package sought

Meanwhile, Bidar District Minister Eshwar Khandre, along with Municipal Administration Minister Rahim Khan, met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday and urged him to conduct an aerial inspection of the flood-affected Bidar district and announce a special package to provide compensation to the affected farmers and restore infrastructure.

"The farmers in the district had lost 25% of crop in August rain and now the floods and unrelenting rain in September has damaged standing soyabean, tur and urad crops on vast tracts of land. The chief minister has positively responded to our plea and has promised to hold an aerial inspection on September 30," Khandre stated in a press release.

With swollen Bhima river feeding into Krishna river, a flood-like situation has emerged in Raichur district. The Gurjapur bridge cum barrage has gone under the overflowing Krishna river. As much as 5.1 lakh cusec of water was released downstream from Sannati Barrage on Sunday.

Six bridge-cum-barrages across Ghataprabha river in Bagalkot district have been submerged. The vehicular movement between Nargund and Ron was stopped for over 24 hours after the bridge near Yavagal was submerged.

Several parts of the state, including coastal districts and Malnad region, received sharp showers on Sunday.

Two teams from BJP to tour rain-hit districts starting today

BENGALURU, DHNS

Expressing dismay over the loss of homes, crops and livestock in North Karnataka, which has been battered by unrelenting rain, Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra on Sunday accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of ignoring the plight of the region's people.

Vijayendra also announced that, starting Monday, BJP leaders would tour all the rain-hit districts and lend an ear to the grievances of the people who had borne the brunt of nature's fury. "When my father B S Yediyurappa was the CM, he did not wait for the Centre's nod but ensured distribution of relief funds above and beyond what the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) prescribed. But the Congress government is taking no proactive measures and waiting for the Centre to disburse funds," said Vijayendra.

Underscoring the Congress government's failure to tend to the woes of the people in the rain-hit districts, Vijayendra announced the formation of two teams of BJP leaders who would visit the affected areas. "Our leaders will assess the situation on the ground, and confer with farmers," he added.

The team led by Vijayendra comprises Leader of Opposition in the Council Chalavadi T Narayanaswamy, former minister and MP Govind Karjol, former minister B Sriramulu, among others. Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka will head the other team that includes former CM and MP Jagadish Shettar, former minister C T Ravi, Deputy Leader of Opposition Arvind Bellad, among others. Presidents of the BJP's district units and key local figures of the party, besides other legislators, are likely to be part of the exercise.

Online betting: Enforcement Directorate to attach assets of some cricketers, actors

NEW DELHI, PTI

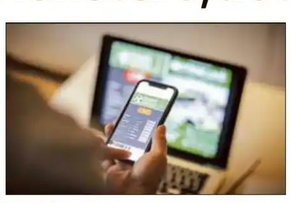
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is soon expected to attach assets worth crores of rupees of certain sportspersons and actors under the anti-money laundering law in a case linked to an online betting and gaming platform.

Official sources told PTI that an investigation into the case related to a portal, '1xBet', has found that some of these celebrities utilised the endorsement fee paid to them for acquiring a variety of assets which qualified as the "proceeds of crime" under the anti-money laundering law.

The federal probe agency is expected to soon issue a provisional attachment order under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to attach these movable and immovable properties, including some located abroad in countries like the UAE. The quantification and valuation of these assets is currently underway. The properties acquired or created from the funds generated out of money laundering are categorised as proceeds of crime, and they are attached so that the persons who indulged in this crime are not able to enjoy the fruits of such a criminal act, the sources said.

After issuing the attachment order, it will be sent to the Adjudicating Authority under the PMLA for confirmation and, once approved, a chargesheet will be filed in a designated court for confiscating these assets, they added.

The ED, over the last few weeks, questioned cricketers like Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Robin Uthappa and


Shikhar Dhawan apart from actors Sonu Sood, Mimi Chakraborty (a former TMC MP) and Ankush Hazra (Bengali cinema) as part of this investigation.

Some online influencers were also questioned.

The agency recorded the statements of these celebrities under Section 50 of the PMLA.

Sources said a number of them furnished the statement of accounts and transactions, through which they allegedly received their endorsement fee from the online platform, to the investigating officer of the case. Statements of a few more sportspersons and actors are to be recorded by the agency in this case.

Actor Urvashi Rautela, the "India ambassador for 1xBet", was summoned, but she did not depose as she was stated to be abroad by the sources.

According to Curacao-registered 1xBet, it is a globally recognised bookmaker with 18 years in the betting industry.

Customers can place bets on thousands of sporting events, with the company's website and app available in 70 languages, according to the company information available on its website. 1xBet has not responded to an email sent by PTI for a response on the ED investigation.

The Union government recently banned real money online gaming in India by bringing legislation.

Two suspended

HUBBALLI, DHNS: Two employees of Hubballi-Dharwad Mahanagara Palike have been suspended for not taking part in the ongoing Social and Educational Survey even after undergoing training, according to HDMC commissioner.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Rainfall occurred at most places over Coastal & North Interior and many places over South Interior Karnataka.
Forecast Sep 29: Generally cloudy sky. Light to Moderate rain very likely.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	22.2	19.4	12.4
Bidar	25.5	20.0	33.8
Vijayapura	23.0	20.5	12.2
Dharwad	23.6	NA	1.8
Haveri	25.0	20.8	0.6
Kalaburagi	24.0	20.2	11.1
Raichur	25.0	20.4	0.0

COASTAL

Honnavar	28.9	23.2	26.2
Karwar	26.2	24.4	14.7
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	26.8	23.3	74.9

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	NA	NA	2.0
Bengaluru	26.0	20.2	1.0
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	29.1	21.5	16.0
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	25.2	20.6	1.3
Davangere	26.0	20.0	0.0
Hassan	24.5	19.6	1.0
Mysuru	28.8	20.0	5.0
Madikeri	--	--	--
Kolar	28.2	19.2	4.0

OTHER STATIONS

New Delhi	36.0	28.0	NIL
Kolkata	33.0	28.0	NIL
Mumbai	28.0	27.0	NA
Chennai	34.0	28.0	NA
Pune	26.0	22.0	NA
Hyderabad	28.0	23.0	NA
Th'puram	31.0	25.0	NIL

DH Classifieds

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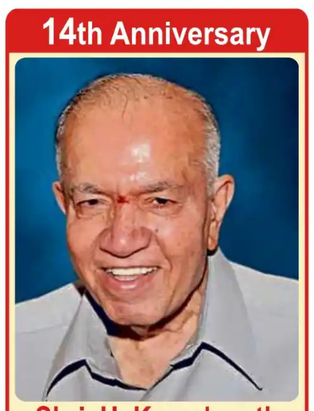
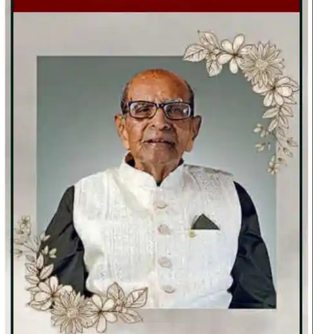

Shri. H. Kamalanath
07-08-1925 to 29-09-2011
Standard Book Company
Standard Press
Former President
Bangalore Gayana Samaja
Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association
Karnataka Publishers and Book Sellers Association
Grieving Family Members

OBITUARY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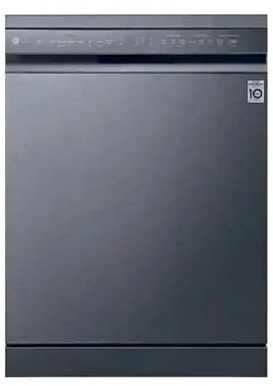

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Karur tragedy exposes recurring lapses

The September 27 tragedy that claimed the lives of at least 40 people, more women and children than men, in Karur, Tamil Nadu, bore the hallmarks of everything that could go wrong at a political rally — poor timing, an overwhelming crowd, violation of crowd control protocols, neglect of caution and warnings, failure of management and organisation, and a complete lack of preparedness. The toll is likely to rise. Popular Tamil actor Vijay, who was campaigning for his party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), has drawn large crowds to his meetings. Political and religious congregations, as well as entertainment events, are often prone to stampedes, and the Karur tragedy was a textbook case.

The meeting venue was too small to accommodate the large number of people who came to attend it. Over 25,000 people reportedly attended the meeting, despite permission being granted for only 10,000. Vijay's late arrival contributed significantly to the events, as the crowd continued to swell, with many attendees becoming exhausted and fainting. Making people, including women and children, wait for hours under a punishing sun without food and water is both cruel and insensitive. Reports suggest that the stampede started when the crowd was forced to make way for the actor's vehicle. An adequate number of police and security personnel were not present, allegedly because the size of the crowd had exceeded the estimated turnout. Ambulances struggled to reach the venue due to narrow and congested roads. The local hospital lacked the necessary facilities to treat the injured. All contributing factors must be investigated to provide a complete picture of the incident. A police investigation is underway, and the Tamil Nadu government has instituted a judicial enquiry under a former high court judge.

A lack of preparedness and disregard for safety protocols led to the loss of lives

The primary responsibility for a stampede typically rests with the organisers of the event. The actor-politician and the managers of his party cannot escape that. In recent weeks, there were complaints about lapses and law-and-order issues in TVK rallies. The court had told both the party and the police to exercise better caution. Unfortunately, the tragedy is now being politicised with parties blaming each other, and even suggesting sabotage. Stampedes are often the result of a chain of events. Hopefully the investigations will clarify the causes of the Karur tragedy, and fix responsibility. Stampedes have become serial disasters in the country, and the lessons from them are not being learnt, and they keep occurring in city after city, and state after state.

High Seas Treaty gives oceans a lifeline

The coming into force of the High Seas Treaty under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is a landmark event in the efforts to protect the genetic diversity and ecology of vast zones of oceans and seas outside the territorial waters of nations. It is set to become international law in January 2026. UN treaties need ratification by at least 60 countries to become law, and Morocco became the 60th nation to do so last week. It is a hard-fought law developed over two decades, and environmentalists have described it as a conservation event that happens once in a generation. The treaty was finalised by UN members in 2023, and it will provide the legal framework for the sustainable use and conservation of marine resources. Though the seas constitute two-thirds of the world's oceans, only less than 10% of them are legally protected now.

The treaty makes provisions for establishing marine protected areas, including rules for checking potentially harmful activities like deep-sea mining and geo-engineering schemes. It also creates a framework for technology-sharing, funding, and scientific collaboration for activities in the high seas. Decisions will be made multilaterally through Conferences of Parties, and not by individual countries. Countries will have to assess the impact of their activities in their own waters on the areas beyond their jurisdictions and share the information with others. It also stipulates that no mining shall occur in international waters until a UN body, the International Seabed Authority, agrees on how to monitor and regulate it. It is the responsibility of all nations to protect the high seas from pollution, and to ensure that they are not exploited for narrow gains by individual countries against the common interests of all others. It also provides for sharing sea resources and scientific knowledge gained from exploration among member countries.

India has signed but not ratified the High Seas Treaty, pending parliamentary legislation

The treaty does not have a punitive enforcement mechanism but relies on individual countries to regulate their own activities and those of their agencies and companies. India has signed the agreement but not yet ratified it. The government has said that the ratification will be done after the enabling legislation is passed by Parliament. The United States had signed the agreement under the Joe Biden administration, but the Donald Trump administration has distanced itself from it. Among the G7 countries, only France has ratified it. It is important that all major countries, which have long coastlines and are engaged in activities in the seas, ratify the treaty and ensure that the seas, as a global commons, serve the best interests of all humanity. The fight against climate change is also crucially linked with the state of the oceans.

POWERING EV GOALS

A green mobility push through 'Battery Aadhaar'

Digitalised solutions that can provide insights into a battery's life can unlock financing opportunities and boost EV penetration

ANMOL JAIN AND NITISH ARORA

India's electric vehicle (EV) sector is gaining traction, with EVs accounting for 7.5% of total vehicle sales in FY 2024–2025 — nearly 2 million units sold, 60% of which were electric two-wheelers.

Despite this progress, the country remains far from its ambitious 2030 EV penetration goals. Key hurdles such as high upfront costs, inadequate charging infrastructure, range anxiety and limited model availability are impeding the adoption.

Another major bottleneck is the lack of affordable and accessible financing. Traditional auto loans, designed primarily for internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, fail to address the unique characteristics of EVs — high upfront costs, uncertain residual value and rapidly evolving technologies.

The lack of historical data on EV performance and battery reliability adds to perceived financier risks. Consequently, EV buyers, both personal and commercial, face up to 9% higher interest rates, 6-18 months shorter loan tenures and 10-30% lower loan-to-value (LTV) ratios than ICE buyers.

Commercial EV loans are hit hardest due to lender concerns over vehicles' operational reliability, resale value and battery degradation.

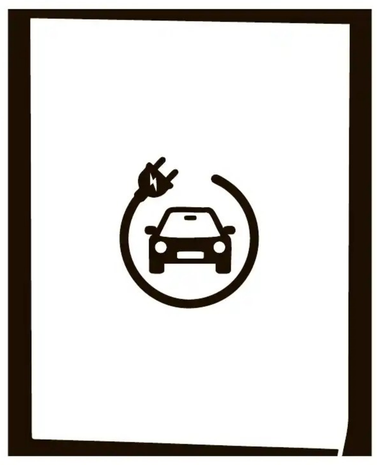
At the core of this issue is the battery, which makes up nearly 40% of an EV's cost. The secondary market value of EV batteries for reuse in second-life applications or recycling remains poorly defined due to a lack of clear valuation framework for the end-of-life batteries. This significantly increases the perceived risks, further restricting financing options and slowing the EV market penetration.

This necessitates digitalised solutions that can provide transparent, real-time insights into a battery's remaining useful life. Such tools can significantly enhance consumer confidence, unlock financing opportunities and enable new business models for second-life applications, repurposing and recycling.

In May, the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Niti Aayog, the World Resources Institute (WRI) India, and the United Nations Environment Programme proposed a national Battery Aadhaar Initiative to boost circularity, reduce import dependence and enhance resource security.

Battery Aadhaar is India's opportunity to build a robust digital infrastructure that can track and verify battery performance, safety and value throughout its lifecycle. Akin to the European Union (EU)'s battery passport system, it is envisioned as a unique digital identity for every battery that would record battery-specific data, such as battery chemistry, usage history, state of health (SoH), safety incidents and recycling or second-life status.

By standardising such norms, Battery Aadhaar will serve as a comprehensive digital record for stakeholders through tiered access levels. Public users may view limited and non-sensitive data, while licensed entities such as Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM), insurers and financiers can access anonymised health metrics. Regulators would have full access to ensure compliance, safety and policy monitoring.



India is currently in the early stages of EV adoption, with most batteries yet to reach their end of life. Once they do, these batteries are projected to unlock a potential 49 GWh market for second-life applications by 2030.

The end-to-end traceability will create multiple benefits for second-life utilisation by assessing battery health and directing batteries toward reuse, refurbishment, or recycling and supply chain transparency through data collection from contributors, such as OEMs, authorised service providers, recyclers and regulatory authorities. It also has the potential to support critical mineral recovery, reduce import dependence and aid evidence-based policymaking.

Accountability mechanisms will strengthen trust and compliance, ensuring stakeholders uphold performance, maintenance and safety standards. The framework can also support new business models, like second-life markets, and carbon credit platforms that reward eco-friendly practices. By standardising how used batteries are valued, it can also lower financing risks, helping lenders offer lower interest rates and longer loan terms.

Learning from global initiatives

India is not alone in this situation; different countries have come up with varied frameworks to tackle battery traceability.

The EU's 2023 Battery Regulation requires digital passports for EV and industrial batteries over 2 kWh by 2026. By 2027, batteries must carry a QR code giving detailed information on battery type, model, chemical composition, intended use, performance, carbon footprint data and durability statistics.

The EU has set a target to achieve a minimum recycling efficiency of 70% for lithium-based batteries by December 2030. Battery passports also lower procurement and testing costs, reduce recycling pre-processing expenses and improve recycling rates by extending battery service life.

China's traceability framework, introduced in 2018, mandates that all EV batteries be assigned a unique identification number (UIN), registered on the National Monitoring and Comprehensive Management Platform for Power Battery Traceability. It also mandates updates within 10 working days following key events like sales, servicing, repurposing, or recycling.

To align with the global best practices, the Battery Aadhaar Initiative will need to be adapted to India's unique context—a large informal sector, high-cost sensitivity, and varying levels of digital readiness.

Governance and implementation strategy: The challenges for Battery Aadhaar — high infrastructure costs, fragmented supply chains, OEMs' reluctance to share data, absence of standard protocols, risks of data breaches — underscore the need for robust legal safeguards and secure access controls.

One potential solution is the creation of an independent body under a designated ministry that would be responsible for assigning unique digital IDs, overseeing data collection, validation and sharing, while ensuring strong safeguards for privacy and security.

To mitigate risks of data misuse, competitive sensitivities and interoperability challenges, the framework should be supported by robust governance mechanisms. This can be modelled on the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which serves as a benchmark for large-scale and secure identity and data management systems.

A phased rollout, beginning with pilot projects, can help fine-tune the system. The DST could play a key role in establishing proof of concept through these pilots, which would test data-sharing models, stakeholder incentives and integration protocols across both urban and rural contexts. Insights from these trials will not only guide national implementation but also build the trust and transparency essential for long-term adoption.

(Anmol is senior research associate, Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy; Nitish is associate director, Clean Transportation, NRDC India)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

In the gold fields of nostalgia

The KGF of my memory didn't exist but the journey with my son was precious

WG CDR H R SEETHARAM (RETD)

Recently, I looked at the first item on my bucket list: to visit Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), the place where I was born and spent my childhood years. My son, who had flown in from the United States for just a week, was astonished to discover that this had been on my list for nearly 15 years.

"Dad, we're going there the day after tomorrow, once I've recovered from my jet lag," he exclaimed. His enthusiasm was infectious, and I realised I could no longer postpone the trip.

I began planning our itinerary, eager to relive fond memories. My schedule was simple. Starting with the '5-Lights Circle', we would drive down to see the familiar sights: the KGF Club, whose membership was once exclusively reserved for 'Europeans'; the theatre that screened only English movies; Gifford's shaft, the second deepest mine in the world, which would appear on the right; and further along, the company's hospital, Spencer's shop on the left, and St Joseph's Convent with the English Warehouse and Cresswell standing on either side.

Next on the route was the majestic Edgar's Shaft, which towered above the landscape like a miniature Eiffel Tower. From there, I planned to get down at the Marikuppam Railway Station and walk to our old house, just as I used to back in the day. That house, with its rooms and the swing in the garden, was to be my last destination in KGF. I wanted to wander around the playground where we once played cricket and football, and flew kites. I longed to peek into the garage where Mr Roome once laboured over his model of the mines. On the way back, I planned to stop at St Joseph's Convent, where my sisters studied.

As we set off, my excitement grew. The drive from the 5-Lights Circle was scenic, with lush green trees lining the road. But the familiar landmarks I yearned for – the club, theatre, shafts, or shops -- were nowhere to be seen. Instead, there was only an endless expanse of trees and shrubs. The road stretched on, longer than I remembered, with no signs of the places etched in my memory. We stopped to ask a passer-by for directions to Marikuppam Railway Station. "You have come too far," he said. "Go back and you will see it on your right."

We turned back, but the station never appeared. Finally we gave up and decided to head home. It was a disappointing anticlimax. The KGF of my dream did not exist anymore.

As we drove towards Bengaluru, I couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness. However, my son's company more than made up for it. We chatted, laughed, and reminisced. I remembered a wise exchange between a pupil and a sage. "What is more important, the destination or the journey?" asked the pupil. "Company," replied the sage.

That was the truth of my trip – the wonderful company of my son.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Who is accountable for recurring crowd mismanagement?

The stampede at Karur during actor Vijay's TVK rally, which claimed 40 lives, is a man-made tragedy. How many more deaths must we witness before authorities wake up to their responsibility? In the current instance, the government allowed a politically charged rally in a congested locality with zero planning, instead of ensuring basic safety measures. Where were the barricades, medical facilities, drinking water, or crowd management? To permit such reckless gatherings is not governance; it is betrayal. If Vijay had respected the scheduled time or chosen a safer venue, many families would not be in mourning today.
Vishal Mayur, Tumakuru

Specific law needed

Apropos 'Between love and death: Why honour killings persist' (Sep 28), although the right to choose one's partner is constitutionally protected, the Indian legal system does not classify honour killings as a distinct type of crime. There is no national legislation aimed specifically at preventing and punishing honour killings. Instead, offenders are charged under general criminal laws. A specific law, along with effective enforcement, is necessary to ensure that the concept of family 'honour' does not overshadow an individual's fundamental rights to life, liberty, and dignity. Until honour killings are recognised as a separate legal category in India, constitutional guarantees will not adequately protect those who seek to marry for love outside their caste or community.
K V Chandramouli, Mysuru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

During the time of Tejashwi Yadav's father and mother, the Budget used to be Rs 2,000-2,500 crore, and now the Budget of the Bihar government is more than Rs 3 lakh crore... The Ganga of development has flowed in Bihar and Bihar has progressed because of it...
Nityanand Rai, MoS Home

I suppose our capacity for self-delusion is boundless.
John Steinbeck

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

Sahyog and the free speech maze

One overlooked aspect of the portal's content regulation is its use of automated takedown notices

UTKARSH YADAV AND HARSHITA GUPTA

The rise of social media has led to the free flow of information, but it has also led to the ghost of extremism, hate speech and cybercrimes that cannot be easily exorcised. Governments worldwide, along with social media platforms, are seeking ways to regulate this digital space. Justice M Nagaprasanna of the Karnataka High Court, while dismissing a writ petition challenging the use of the Sahyog portal for content notification to platforms, opined that the portal serves as a "beacon of cooperation between the citizen and the intermediary". The Union government chose to utilise the Sahyog portal for content moderation across various social media platforms. The portal serves as a platform to enrol social media companies and provide them with takedown notifications from departments through automated means.

In March, while challenging the constitutionality of Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, in the Karnataka High Court, X Corp (formerly Twitter) referred to the portal as a "censorship portal". On September 24, the Karnataka High Court rejected X Corp's claims and hailed the portal as a "public good".

While it is understandable that the Union government has concerns regarding content regulation, it's undeniable that the functioning of the portal and the impugned section of the IT Act raise significant questions about free speech, non-arbitrariness and due process. In the Shreya Singhal case, the Supreme Court laid down the law on the removal of content from the Internet, mandating that a written order with reasons be issued and communicated to the party concerned, along with an opportunity to be heard. Section 79(3)(b) is an exception to Section 79 of the IT Act, which is a safe harbour provision designed to protect social media intermediaries from liability for third-party content.

Furthermore, the limited power to take down content under Section 69A (mandatory procedural safeguards such as reasoned written orders, opportunities to be heard and judicial review) does not apply to Section 79(3)(b), which makes the entire exercise of using the portal and serving takedown notices susceptible to arbitrariness. This concern becomes even more pertinent since social media platforms have alleged that government entities, including state governments, even those unauthorised to do so, often issue takedown notices to silence dissent and curb the views of political opponents. This violates the apex court's Shreya Singhal ruling, which restricts 'actual knowledge' triggering loss of safe harbour protection strictly to formal court or authorised agency orders. This shift places an undue burden on intermediaries and endangers freedom of expression.

Additionally, the expansive and vague scope of 'unlawful information', particularly under Rule 3(1)(d) of The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, often read in conjunction with Section 79(3)(b) to issue takedown notices, risks arbitrary removals and promotes over-censorship.

The use of the Sahyog portal for content regulation has one overlooked aspect: the use of automated means to serve takedown notices. Automation in the domain of content regulation has been critiqued on the grounds of the prevalence of bias in AI deployment, a lack of contextual understanding about a given post, making the process prone to flagging non-harmful content, and opacity in the automated system.

The Karnataka High Court compared the portal with the US' Take It Down Act (TIDA), stating that X Corp cannot adopt double standards by choosing to abide by the former in the US while refusing to accept the latter. On a deeper look, however, the TIDA is a completely different regulation when compared to the Sahyog portal.

Albeit this, its explicit immunity for platforms acting in good faith to remove non-consensual intimate imagery under TIDA highlights a path forward for India. Its victim-driven removals and clear timelines stand in contrast to the Sahyog portal's broad, opaque takedown orders issued by government agencies without the procedural safeguards mandated under Section 69A.

Likewise, the EU's Digital Services Act (Articles 9, 15, 17, and 20) sets benchmarks for transparency, user notification, appeal mechanisms and out-of-court settlement for dispute resolution, offering users and intermediaries impartial avenues beyond platforms' internal grievance processes, thereby reinforcing checks and balances. Furthermore, the DSA also focuses on transparent use of automated means for content moderation.

While acknowledging the government's concerns, the Sahyog portal experience demonstrates the urgent need for a balanced co-regulatory framework that safeguards fundamental rights while addressing harmful content. India should thus focus Sahyog on specific egregious harms, require government orders to be reasoned and subject to appeal, and ensure human oversight for subjective content like hate speech.

(Utkarsh is a law student at RMLNLU; Harshita is a student at National Law University, Jodhpur)

Homeland conflict: Promised land and the betrayal of Palestine

PASCAL ALAN NAZARETH

Mahatma Gandhi's views about the Jews and Palestine were as clear as they were prophetic. In his journal, *Harijan*, Gandhi wrote in November 1938: "My sympathies are all with the Jews. They have been the untouchables of Christianity. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hitler. If ever war could be justified in the name of humanity, it would be against Germany. But I do not believe in any war. Besides, my sympathy for the Jews does not blind me to the requirements of justice. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of Jews wherever they were born and bred."

Many reputed Jewish scholars have since acknowledged that these "requirements of justice" have not been met in Palestine.

Tom Segev, in *One Palestine Complete*, dismantles the myth of Palestine as "a land without people for a people without land", quoting British General Walter Congreve: "We might as well declare that England belongs to Italy because it was once ruled by the Romans."

Avi Shlaim, in *The Iron Wall,* stated: "Conflict accompanied the Zionist enterprise long before Hitler came on the scene... There is no denying that the establishment of the State of Israel involved a massive injustice to the Palestinians."

Gerald Kauffman, former British Labour Minister, writing in the Spectator in April 2004, said: "What the Egyptian Pharaoh did to the Jews, the Jews have now done to the Palestinians, who have no Moses to save them, and no Red Sea will part for them".

United States President Jimmy Carter, architect of the 1978 Camp David Accord, in his *Peace Not Apartheid,* wrote: "Since the 1979 Israeli–Egyptian peace treaty, much blood has been shed, and repeated efforts for a negotiated peace between Israel and its neighbours have failed. Peace will come to the Middle East only when the Israeli government complies with international law, with the roadmap for peace, with official American policy, and accepts its legal borders. The United States is squandering its international prestige and intensifying global anti-American terrorism by abetting Israel's colonisation of Palestinian land".

In sharp contrast, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, addressing the US Congress in May 2011, declared: "In Judea and Samaria, Jewish people are not foreign occupiers. We are not the British in India or the Belgians in the Congo. This is the land of our forefathers to which Abraham brought the idea of one God, where David confronted Goliath. No distortion of history can deny the 4000-year-old bond of the Jewish people to this land".

Today, Gaza and the West Bank resemble the Warsaw Ghetto of 1943, though on a larger scale. The Jewish armed uprising in that Ghetto — supported with arms by the Polish resistance —-was hailed worldwide as an act of great heroism. Yet Hamas' October 7, 2023, uprising against seven decades of Israeli repression, mass incarceration of Palestinians in the "world's largest open-air prison", the destruction of homes and livelihoods (over 500,000 olive trees have been uprooted or burnt by its 'settlers'), and the killing of over 60,000 Palestinians is denigrated as "outrageous terrorism."

No UN member state has been as consistently belligerent, or as scornful of the UN Charter, international law and the sovereignty of other nations, as Israel. Yet it has never been censured by the UN Security Council because the US has cast 57 vetoes to shield it.

Columbia University Professor Jeffrey Sachs, writing in *The New York Times* in January 2024, observed: "The Israeli government claims it is in an existential struggle for survival and must take every measure to prevent its destruction. This is false.

There is no ethical, legal or strategic justification for killing thousands of civilians, and uprooting two million of them to protect Israel. Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2007. It has never captured Israeli territory, nor threatened its existence. It has neither an air force nor a navy. Israel has both and a 600,000-personnel 'Defence Force'. Hamas only has 30,000 fighters."

Supporting Israel's genocide in Gaza, Sachs warned, is not only unethical but also "antithetical to Israel's long-term security and perhaps even its survival. The Arab and Islamic States have repeatedly declared their readiness to normalise relations with Israel within the context of a two-state solution."

The great tragedy for the Jews is that, after centuries of wanderings and massacres (six million in Nazi Germany), when they finally secured a homeland, their leaders built it on the exclusionary and racist ideology of Zionism, rather than on the ennobling tenets of Judaism.

When I visited Israel from Egypt, where I was India's ambassador, in April 1992, I was struck by Jerusalem's sacredness to the world's three great religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Their holy sites lie within walking distance of each other. I remember thinking that if only Israel would discard its Zionist ideology and embrace the precepts of Judaism's Prophets—particularly Hillel the Elder and Isiah — Jerusalem could become the world's foremost site of pilgrimage and inter-religious harmony. I continue to hope that such a future will one day become a reality.

(The writer is a retired diplomat)

European officials fear that Moscow is escalating its antagonism of Europe as US support recedes. A focus of worry now: election interference in Moldova

PAUL SONNE, MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ, LARA JAKES AND STEVEN LEE MYERS

Residential buildings that were destroyed during Russian drone and missile strikes on Kyiv, Ukraine, on Sunday. REUTERS

Russia steps up provocations in Europe, alarming leaders there

Russia has flown drones into Poland and Romania, sent fighter jets into Estonian airspace, buzzed a German navy frigate in the Baltic Sea and backed an aggressive shadow campaign to sway this weekend's election in Moldova. And that's just in the past three weeks.

The frenzy of Russian action has prompted alarm in European capitals, where officials are worried that Moscow is stepping up its antagonism of Europe, as US resolve to counter Russia recedes under President Donald Trump.

The European jitters extended to Scandinavia this past week. Airports in Denmark and Norway shut down because of unexplained drone activity. Denmark's prime minister said she couldn't rule out Russia as the culprit. The Kremlin denied involvement and dismissed European concerns about the other recent episodes as "exalted hysteria." But perhaps no country in Europe, apart from Ukraine, is feeling the spectre of Russian power at the moment more acutely than Moldova.

A parliamentary election there Sunday could decide whether Moldova, a nation of 2.4 million and a former Soviet republic, continues its path to the European Union under President Maia Sandu or slips back into Moscow's orbit. Russia has taken aim at Sandu's pro-Europe party, unleashing a barrage of influence operations to undermine her government that has intensified with the approach of the vote.

Sandu hit back in a dramatic speech this past week after Moldovan authorities detained 74 people and claimed to have disrupted a plot to incite unrest coordinated by criminal elements from Russia.

"The Kremlin believes we are all for sale, that we are too small to resist, that we are not a country but a territory," Sandu told Moldovans on Monday. "But Moldova is our home, and our home is not for sale."

The Kremlin spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, responded by accusing her of suppressing the votes of Moldovans who want closer relations with Moscow.

Experts viewed the spate of Russian moves as provocations to probe for potential weaknesses and assess Europe's responses. "There does seem to be a feeling that something has shifted," said Eric Rubin, a senior fellow at the Centre for European Policy Analysis in Washington and former U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria. "I would suspect that this is a testing phase."

A trying moment for NATO

Last week, days after the drone incursion into Poland, Italian F-35 fighter pilots scrambled over the Gulf of Finland to intercept Russian MiG-31 warplanes that made a 12-minute incursion into Estonian airspace. The Italians got close enough to see the Russian pilots wave.

The Russian jets, which had disabled their radio transponder devices, were intercepted as soon as they entered Estonia's airspace, said Col Gaetano Farina, the Italian commander of the NATO task force patrolling the airspace. The two Italian jets rocked their wings, an internationally known manoeuvre to signal that they were intercepting the Russians. He said the Russian pilots then allowed the Italian planes to escort them back into international airspace and over the Russian border in Kaliningrad.

While the Russian fighters were in Estonia's airspace — about 5 miles deep, at one point — the Italian pilots assessed what weapons the Russian jets were carrying, Farina said. He said they were air-to-air missiles, not bombs, a distinction that Estonian officials have said led them to conclude that an attack on the country's population was highly unlikely.

Russia has denied that it left international airspace, infuriating Estonian officials, who have warned that Russia's invasion might not stop at Ukraine. Estonia shares a 183-mile border with Russia. Already, faint fault lines have begun to emerge in Europe over how to respond to Russia.

This past week, Radosław Sikorski, Poland's foreign minister, threatened military action against any Russian aircraft that strayed into Polish airspace in the future.

Germany's defence minister, Boris Pistorius, however, said shooting down Russian planes would be unhelpful and warned fellow NATO countries not to fall into a Russian "escalation trap" set by President Vladimir Putin.

"Prudence is not cowardice, but rather responsibility toward your own country and toward peace in Europe," Pistorius said.

Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, speaking at the United Nations on Saturday, said that any aggression against his country "would be met with a decisive response."

The nervousness in Europe stems in part from questions about whether the United States, the guarantor of Western Europe's security since World War II, would respond to a Russian attack under Trump, a longtime skeptic of NATO.

Žygimantas Pavilionis, Lithuania's former ambassador to the United States and now a member of his country's parliament, said Trump's warm welcome of Putin during a summit in Alaska last month led only to escalation from Moscow, with increased missile attacks on Ukraine and now incursions into NATO territory. "I always defend America," he said. "But I need some action from my beloved America."

Moldova crossroads

Russia sees the elections in Moldova as an opportunity to damage one of the most pro-Western leaders in what the Kremlin views as its rightful sphere of influence, analysts said. The small nation has become the latest, most active front in Russia's years-long effort to denigrate Western democracy and promote Moscow-friendly leaders. Moscow operated similar online influence campaigns during recent elections in Germany and France.

Though Sandu is not on the ballot, her party risks losing its majority. That would deal a blow to the EU and usher in political uncertainty that Moscow could exploit.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine reduced Moscow's influence across other post-Soviet countries, including Moldova, where the government accelerated its march toward the EU and broke economic ties with Russia, said Anastasia Pociumban, a research fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations. Moscow sees the election as an opening to reverse the trend.

"Russia is weaker now as a geopolitical actor, but wants to retain Moldova in its sphere of influence," Pociumban said.

Sandu's government has accused the Kremlin of planning to spend 100 million euros to finance political campaigns, spread disinformation and organize protests to challenge the outcome of the vote. In previous votes, Moldovan authorities have accused Russia-linked networks of offering voters bribes.

A day after Sandu's speech, Russia's foreign intelligence service issued a statement claiming that European forces were planning to invade and occupy Moldova to enforce a "Euro-democracy" dictatorship led by Sandu following the election.

Western analysts saw the statement as Russia projecting its own possible intentions onto Europe and stoking fears among Moldovan voters of being dragged into the Ukraine war. Russia-linked accounts online claimed falsely to have photo evidence of French forces already arriving.

The Kremlin denied Sandu's accusations and accused her of silencing the legitimate views of pro-Russia Moldovans.

Oleg Matveychev, a member of Russia's parliament from the ruling United Russia party, encapsulated the Kremlin's messaging, warning that Moldova's vote will decide whether the country becomes a "second Ukraine." Moldova's economy has struggled amid the war in neighbouring Ukraine, with the pro-Russian opposition looking to harness those economic woes as a protest vote.

The New York Times

Towards a genuine Atmanirbhar Bharat

D JEEVAN KUMAR

As the world celebrates Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, it is worth asking what the Mahatma might say about the profound shifts shaping the global economy. For decades, globalisation was seen as an inevitable force binding the world through trade, technology, and culture. But in recent years, cracks have appeared in this narrative. The United States under Donald Trump champions tariffs, 'America First' protectionism, and a retreat from global trade deals. Europe has witnessed its own populist backlash. Multilateral institutions struggle for legitimacy. The Covid-19 pandemic further exposed the fragility of extended supply chains and over-dependence on distant producers.

In this climate of scepticism, India has advanced its own strategy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for an Atmanirbhar Bharat—a self-reliant India—seeks to reduce dependence on imports, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and build greater resilience. On the surface, it appears strikingly Gandhian, even echoing the spirit of *swadeshi* Gandhi championed. But is Atmanirbhar Bharat truly Gandhian – or is it simply another industrial strategy dressed in indigenous rhetoric? To answer this, we must measure it against Gandhi's moral compass.

Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat is presented as a path to economic independence. Campaigns such as 'Vocal for Local' and incentives for domestic manufacturing (from chips to ships) aim to cut imports and generate jobs. These appear to echo Gandhi's *swadeshi* principle of prioritising local goods and industries. But it is framed largely in terms of industrial policy and competitiveness. Its emphasis on large-scale manufacturing, integration into global supply chains, and courting of multinationals betrays a paradox: it seeks self-reliance by deepening global competition. This aligns less with Gandhi's *swadeshi* and more with State-led capitalism.

Gandhi would have posed an uncomfortable question: Atmanirbhar for whom? If self-reliance translates into corporate profits while farmers, artisans, and informal workers remain insecure, it cannot claim Gandhian legitimacy. Gandhi insisted the touchstone of every policy was the last person—Antyodaya.

Consider agriculture. Policies encouraging contract farming, large-scale exports, and corporate entry may boost GDP but risk undermining small farmers' livelihoods. Gandhi would have insisted on strengthening local food systems, cooperative farming, and organic practices. In industry, his preference was for decentralised village industries, not giant factories driven by profits rather than community welfare.

On ecological grounds too, Gandhi's critique is piercing. His warning that "the earth provides enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed" resonates strongly amid today's climate crises. Any version of Atmanirbhar Bharat that prioritises growth over sustainability only aggravates the ecological debt future generations will bear.

If India wishes to chart a truly Gandhian path of self-reliance—what we might call Atmanirbhar Bharat 2.0—three principles must guide it:

Swadeshi as ethical responsibility: Consumption should be guided by conscience, not just cost. Choosing local goods must be seen as a responsibility to reduce carbon footprints, safeguard livelihoods, and preserve cultural diversity. For Gandhi, spinning khadi was solidarity with millions of spinners and weavers. Today, supporting local farmers' markets, handloom cooperatives, and micro-enterprises can play a similar role.

De-globalisation as humanisation: Moving away from exploitative global systems should not mean retreat into narrow nationalism. Instead, it should build resilient local networks—community-owned renewable energy, local food systems, and neighbourhood health services. Such de-globalisation puts human needs above the volatility of global markets.

Localisation as empowerment: Gandhi's Gram Swaraj envisioned villages as self-sufficient yet interconnected. Today this translates into strengthening decentralised governance, promoting cooperatives, and investing in local innovation. In such a framework, self-reliance is not autarky or isolation, but balance. The Gandhian balance—between the local and the global, need and greed—offers an alternative path at a time when globalisation itself appears exhausted. By reimagining self-reliance not as a fortress economy but as a network of empowered, sustainable communities, India could pioneer an Atmanirbhar Bharat 2.0: a form of de-globalisation that heals rather than divides, a localisation that empowers rather than excludes. That would be a true homage to Gandhi in troubled times—and a gift to a world searching for alternatives to a failing global order.

(The writer was the head of the Centre for Gandhian Studies at Bangalore University. He is currently Managing Trustee, Sarvodaya International Trust and Member, Governing Body of Karnataka Gandhi Smarak Nidhi)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: SEPTEMBER 1975

Jnanpith award for Marathi novelist

New Delhi, Sept. 28
Marathi novelist Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar has been awarded the Jnanpith Literary Award for 1974. This award of Rs. one lakh was announced here today by the Award Selection Board. This is the tenth award, nine having been presented so far to the most outstanding creative Indian writers of various Indian languages. Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar has to his credit 15 novels, 29 collections of short stories, 11 collections of essays, and 10 works of literary criticism.

25 YEARS AGO: SEPTEMBER 2000

Nagappa 'escapes' from Veerappan's clutches

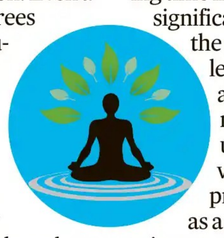
Bangalore, Sept 28
In a dramatic turn to the 59-day- old Rajkumar kidnap case, Mr Nagappa, one of the four hostages, today "escaped" from the captivity of forest brigand Veerappan. Director-General and Inspector General of Police C Dinakar said Nagappa escaped in the wee hours, around 2 am today, and reached Gajanur by 5 pm through Kalmala forests of Tamil Nadu. However, doubts were still being expressed about the way Mr Nagappa could free himself from the brigand.

OASIS | JAYANTHI CHANDRASEKARAN

The healing power of forest bathing

The Japanese word *Shinrin-yoku*, meaning forest bathing, conjures up the scent of damp earth, the rustle of leaves underfoot and the dappled sunlight filtering through the tree canopy. Far from being a mystical practice, the concept of forest bathing emerged in the 1980s as a public health initiative in Japan to combat rising stress levels among the populace. It's a deliberate practice of immersing oneself in the atmosphere of the forest, engaging all senses to achieve a state of mindful presence and profound relaxation. Unlike hiking or exercising, forest bathing is not about reaching a destination or burning calories; it is about slowing down, breathing deeply, and reconnecting with the natural world through the five senses.

Forest bathing does not require a remote wilderness expedition. Even a local park with a cluster of trees can offer a valuable opportunity for immersion. The key is intentionality; turning off the phone, leaving behind distractions, and consciously engaging with the natural environment. It might involve sitting quietly and observing, walking slowly and mindfully, or simply breathing deeply and absorbing the forest's essence. The benefits are cumulative and regular practice can lead to sustained improvements in mental and physical health.



The scientific studies by Japanese researchers have shown that spending time in a forest environment can significantly lower cortisol levels, the primary stress hormone, leading to a reduction in anxiety and an improved mood. This is partly attributed to phytoncides, the volatile organic compounds produced by plants, primarily as a defence mechanism against insects, bacteria, and fungi. These airborne chemicals have been found to boost the activity of NK cells, a type of white blood cells in humans that play a crucial role in our immune system.

Henry David Thoreau, the American naturalist and essayist is probably best known for the time he spent at Walden Pond. In his essay "Walking", he asserts, "I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least, sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all the world's engagements." All of us have an innate yearning to connect with nature. To literally shower in the greenery is a sensory immersion, allowing nature to gently draw us into the present moment and quieten our mental chatter. It's a powerful antidote, offering a scientifically-backed pathway to improved well-being.

KARUR STAMPEDE: Fans climbed rooftops and trees; say area was unfit for such a gathering

Locals blame delay, poor planning for 40 deaths

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
KARUR, DHNS

By the time TVK chief Vijay arrived at Velusamy Nagar, the venue of his rally in Karur, at 7.30 pm on Saturday, he was already delayed by seven hours.

On Sunday, a day after the stampede, hundreds of footwear and TVK flags were strewn across the point from where Vijay addressed his supporters, bearing witness to the devastation that took the lives of 40 people.

The crowd, including young women and children eager to catch a glimpse of Vijay, which began to gather at around 11 am, not just swelled as the hours went by, but also became restless with several unruly fans climbing trees and scaling nearby buildings, most of which had tin roofs.

Besides, inadequate planning by TVK, alleged lapses in providing enough security by the police, are some of the reasons that could have led to the incident.

Locals told *DH* that it was not the right place for a political rally as it is surrounded by densely populated areas and cannot accommodate 25,000 people.

Eyewitnesses told *DH* that the chaos began at around 7.20 pm when Vijay's arrival was announced.

This was when people jostled with each other to move ahead and reach the spot where Vijay's specially designed bus was to halt.

A badge with a picture of actor-politician Vijay lies amid footwear and other belongings left by attendees at the site of a stampede during an election campaign rally held by Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam in Karur. REUTERS

Suspension of power supply to prevent a catastrophe, as unruly fans have the habit of climbing poles, added to the confusion.

"When Vijay's vehicle approached the point, his face wasn't visible. People pushed each other to move forward to catch a glimpse of the actor. And that is when an ambulance made its way into the crowd," Karthikeyan, who runs a mobile shop in the area, told *DH*.

As people made way for the ambulance, there was mayhem.

"The crowd collided with a tree, which was being used as a vantage point by around 15 people. As a result, a hoarding kept by fans collapsed and people fell onto the ground," another resident, Sudarshan, told *DH*.

As people kept moving to the side of the road, many fell into the drainage. "I rescued a young man and gave him water, but he died. I can never forget this," Sudarshan said.

Good Samaritans like Karthikeyan, Sudarshan, and Poornima – who rescued many people and gave them water, and helped them regain their consciousness.

Poornima, who said she could not even breathe at her home on the first floor of a building near the spot, said people climbed the balconies to see Vijay.

"There was no power for a long time and we could not even breathe properly. I can only imagine how difficult it would have been for people who were standing in the crowd," she added.

Sudarshan alleged that there was no adequate police protection, as there were hardly 300 police personnel in the locality to handle around 25,000 people.

A 2-yr-old, young couple & women pay the ultimate price

KARUR, DHNS: The Karur tragedy has cut a swathe of sorrow through the families, claiming the lives of children, a young couple, and women, among others.

Holding his only child, Sushant, who is recuperating from surgery following a road accident, cried profusely after losing his wife, Brinda, in the stampede.

Attempting to put his daughter to sleep, Sushant told his relatives at the Karur GH that he was clueless as to how he would make his two-year-old child understand that her mother would never return.

The child, unaware of what was unfolding before her, tried to persuade her aunt to play with her. "How do I bring up this child alone without my Brinda? She never left the child alone. Yesterday was the first time she left the child with me. I can't fathom that she won't ever return," Sushant told *DH*.

Brinda, who went to the rally with a couple of her friends, went missing and was found unconscious at the venue on Saturday night, but her family came to know about her death only on Sunday morning.

While 10 children lost their lives, a majority of the adults who fell victim to the stampede were under the age of 40.

A mother with hearing and speech impairment mourned her two-year-old Hari Vishnu's death, a family unable to control their emotions after losing a to-be-wed couple, tears rolling down two teenagers who have lost their father, the family's sole breadwinner, and another family mourning the loss of a mother and her two daughters.

The scene outside the mortuary was heart-wrenching as relatives broke down after seeing the body of their loved ones.

Pictures of the father holding Vishnu in his arms and pleading for help broke everyone's heart.

At their home, the father could cry out his emotions, but the child's mother stood still due to her disability. Vishnu was taken to the rally by his aunt. "I have no one to fight with anymore. He should have returned home at least to keep fighting with him," a tearful woman told her relatives as she mourned her brother's death.

Gokula Sri and Akash, who were to exchange wedding vows next month, went to the rally despite warnings from their family members that the venue would be crowded. "I kept calling them every hour to check on them. When I called at 7.30 pm, there was no response. I lost not just my daughter, but my would-be son-in-law too," an inconsolable mother of 24-year-old Gokula Sri said.

A teenage girl said she was saved by a Good Samaritan. "If not for that person, I would have been part of the list of victims," she added.

Family members and relatives of victims wait at a hospital in Karur on Sunday. DH PHOTO

Sabarimala gold covering found at residence of sponsor's kin

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Mystery surrounding suspected irregularities in the gold plating of the 'Dwarapalaka' idols at the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple has deepened, with portions of the gold-plated cover of the peedom (pedestal) recovered from the residence of a relative of the Bengaluru-based Malayali sponsor in Thiruvananthapuram.

The vigilance wing of the Travancore Devaswom Board, recently directed by the Kerala High Court to submit a report on the matter, traced the gold-plated peedom to a house on the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram, reportedly of a close relative of Unnikrishnan Potti, who donated the gold plating in 2019.

The irregularities came to light after the cover was taken to Chennai for repairs, allegedly flouting official procedures.

The high court later noted that the weight of the gold-plated copper cover had decreased by 4.5 kg.

Potti said that although one of the gold-plated coverings he initially provided did not fit the idol, he did not take it back as it was given as an offering.

With the vigilance team recovering the peedam from the house of his kin, the mystery has deepened. There are unconfirmed reports that a worker of Potti had kept the peedam at his residence, and it was shifted to Potti's relative's house following the recent row.

Bodoland People's Front stakes claim to form next council

GUWAHATI/KOKRAJHAR, PTI: The BPF on Sunday staked claim to form the next Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in Assam, after sweeping the elections. The newly elected BPF representatives, led by party chief Hagrama Mohilary, met Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya.

Mohilary was on Saturday elected unanimously by the policy-making body of the party to head the next council.

The outgoing BTC chief, Pramod Boro of the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), also called on Acharya earlier in the day and submitted his resignation.

The BPF, which had headed the BTC since its formation in 2005 before being ousted from power in 2020, won 28 out of 40 seats.

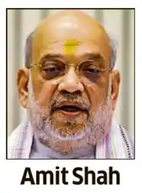
The UPPL and the BJP, which had jointly run the administration for the last five years but contested separately, bagged only seven and five seats, respectively.

Mohilary said, "We met the governor and staked claim to form the next council. We also invited him to be a part of our oath-taking ceremony on October 3. He has given verbal assurance to attend it."

Shah rejects Naxals' ceasefire offer

NEW DELHI, PTI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday rejected the ceasefire offer given by Maoists, saying if the extremists want to surrender and lay down arms, they are most welcome to do so and security forces would not fire a single bullet on them.



Amit Shah

"Recently, to spread confusion, a letter was written stating that what has happened so far has been a mistake, that a ceasefire should be declared, and that we (Naxals) want to surrender. I want to say there will be no ceasefire. If you want to surrender, there is no need for a ceasefire. Lay down your arms, not a single bullet will be fired," Shah said.

He said if the Naxals want to surrender, a red carpet welcome awaits them with a "lucrative" rehabilitation policy.

Addressing the valedictory session of a seminar on 'Naxal Mukt Bharat', Shah also hit out at Left parties for extending ideological support to Left Wing Extremism and dismissed their arguments that lack of development led to the Maoist violence. He said it was due to the "red terror" that development could not reach many parts of the country for several decades.

"I want to tell you that there will be no ceasefire. If you want to surrender, lay down arms and not a single bullet will be fired. A red carpet welcome is waiting for you if you surrender," he said.

Shah said this in response to the offer of a ceasefire given by the CPI (Maoist) sometime back, following the intensified operations carried out by security forces, including "Operation Black Forest" along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border, in which several top Naxals were eliminated.

The minister said there are many people who believe that merely stopping the killings by Naxals is enough to eradicate Naxalism from India.

However, he said, this is not true as Naxalism developed in India because its ideology was nurtured by people within the society.

"Why did the Naxal problem arise, grow and develop in the country? Who provided them with ideological support? Until Indian society understands this, the idea of Naxalism and the people in society who provided ideological support, legal support, and financial support, the fight against Naxalism will not end," he said, adding, "We must identify and understand those who continue to nurture the Naxal ideology".

Maoist leadership in crisis amid setbacks and calls for peace talks

Top strategist's push to renounce violence sparks internal division

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

The outlawed CPI (Maoist) organisation, facing severe reverses under sustained security operations, appears to be undergoing one of its deepest leadership crises in decades, with senior leaders openly divided on the question of renouncing armed struggle.

The debate began after Politburo member Mallojula Venugopal Rao, alias Abhay, released a statement saying it was time for the party to consider giving up weapons temporarily and opening the door for peace talks with the government. Abhay, a top strategist in the Maoist organisation for over four decades, said there was a growing opinion within the ranks in favour of ending the insurgency but stressed the need for a broader consensus.

His letter was met with an immediate rebuttal from Telangana committee spokesperson Jagan, along with senior Central Committee (CC) members Kadari Satyanarayana alias Kosa and Katta Ramachandra Reddy alias Vikalp. They dismissed his view as "personal opinion" and warned that if Abhay did not surrender his weapons voluntarily, the People's Guerrilla Army would "seize" them. The unusually sharp language against a senior figure highlighted the growing rift within the leadership.

Abhay, believed to be 69 and underground since the 1970s, hails from Peddapalli in Telangana. He has been associated with organisational strategy and propaganda. He emerged as one of the most visible figures of the Maoist leadership after the death of spokesperson Cherukuri Rajkumar in 2010. Since then, he has issued press statements under the name Abhay. His prominence increased further after the death of General Secretary Basavaraj, when his name was considered for the top post.

The latest statement shocked observers for its unprecedented form and content. Apart from openly announcing a "temporary renunciation of armed struggle" and "decision to give up arms", it was accompanied by Abhay's photograph, along with an email address and Facebook ID. This marked the first time an underground Maoist leader publicly released his image.

Notably, the language used in the release was softer about political leaders than usual, even referring to the prime minister and the home minister with respect, an unusual departure from the group's routine rhetoric.

The statement comes at a time when the insurgency is under severe pressure from Operation Kagar, which has seen dozens of cadres eliminated in successive security operations across multiple states in recent months.

Former leaders say the organisational structure is too weak for consensus. "The last proper Central Committee meetings were in 2012 and 2016. Since then, constant operations and logistical issues have prevented gatherings, making consensus impossible," G Narasimha Reddy alias Jampanna, who spent 35 years underground and served as a CC member for 17 years, told *DH*.

He added that ideological splits are not new to the CPI (Maoist). "There were divisions after 1977, yet the movement gained strength later. But this situation is different because the leadership itself is crippled by sustained security actions and surrenders," he said.

3 Maoists carrying Rs 14-lakh bounty killed in Ch'garh

Three Naxalites carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 14 lakh were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Sunday, a senior police official said.

The gun battle took place on a forested hill near Chhindkhadak village along the border of Kanker and Gariaband districts, where a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation in the morning, the Kanker Superintendent of Policesaid.

Bodies of three Naxalites, including a woman cadre, were recovered from the site, along with a self-loading rifle (SLR), a .303 rifle, a 12-bore gun and other Naxalite-related materials, the SP said.

Rain continues to leave trail of destruction in Maha, 10 dead

MUMBAI, DHNS: At least 10 people died as unseasonal rains continued to pound Maharashtra over the weekend, leaving a trail of destruction—damaging houses, washing away standing crops and destroying agricultural fields.

Over the past two days, over 11,800 people have been rescued to safety.

The worst-affected was the Marathwada region, which is already facing agrarian distress.

Over the past couple of days, massive rainfall has been reported from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (earlier Aurangabad), Beed, Hingoli, Jalna, Latur, Nanded, Dharashiv (earlier Osmanabad) and Parbhani, Solapur in Western Maharashtra and Ahilyanagar (Ahmednagar) and Jalgaon in North Maharashtra, where crops spread across several hectares were damaged.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is personally monitoring the situation and overseeing the discharge of water from the dams, many of which are filled to the brim because of heavy rains.

NRI couple apologises for 'garba' kiss video, leaves India

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

PDA FALLOUT

- Video sparks protests; saffron outfit files FIR
- Gujarat couple, married for 16 years, based in Melbourne
- They admit mistake at sacred Navratri site

After two days of a harrowing experience over a viral video showing them kissing while shooting a social media reel during a 'garba' event in Vadodara, an NRI couple reportedly left the country after submitting a written apology to the police.

The video triggered outrage over "inappropriate" behaviour, leading to protests by saffron organisations, including Bajrang Dal, as well as backlash on social media.

Police said they had been married for 16 years and currently resides in Melbourne, Australia. They are from Vadodara and Anand districts.

"They submitted in writing that the place where they kissed was a sacred site during Navratri. They have apologised, stating that they should not have done that. They are locals but have been living in Australia. They have been married for 16 years and have children," a police inspector said.

A senior police officer said the couple flew back to Australia following the controversy. He added that they were forced to come to the police station after an advocate from a saffron organisation filed an FIR against them. He added that the couple had engaged in similar acts in previous years without objections.

Bajrang Dal activists met the organisers of the garba and urged them to ensure incidents that hurt religious sentiments do not recur.

GREEN REVIVAL

TN adds over 2,400 hectares of mangrove cover in four years

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

As part of the efforts to strengthen its coasts to secure a climate-resilient future for coastal districts, the Tamil Nadu government has expanded its mangrove cover with new plantations in over 2,400 hectares and restored another 1,200 hectares in the past four years.

The maximum new plantation has come up in Muthupet in Thiruvarur district to an extent of 1,350 hectares, followed by Nagapattinam (250 hectares), Thoothukudi (211.4 hectares), and Mayiladuthurai (190 hectares).

Mangrove forests serve as nature's frontline defenders, shielding coastlines, nurturing biodiversity, and supporting livelihoods and fish production by serving as nurseries. While new plantations of mangrove trees have come up in 11 districts, including Chennai and Chengalpattu, the restoration activities were taken up in seven districts across the state.

Another highlight of the programme is the restoration of mangroves in Ennore, which was devastated due to the 2023 oil spill from a Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL) refinery after Cyclone Michaung. The Ennore Creek is gradually regaining its natural vibrancy, birdlife, and coastal protection functions.

Point Kalimere in Muthupet is the largest mangrove ecosystem in Tamil Nadu, followed by Pichavaram in Cuddalore District. As many as 17 mangrove species are found in Tamil Nadu, with Avicennia and Rhizophora being the most common species.

Tamil Nadu has a mangrove cover of 41 sqkm and with the new plantations, the state is on its way to increase its mangrove cover by double.

The Muthupet mangrove forest system supports diverse flora and fauna, stabilises sediments, and serves as a natural buffer against tidal surges, cyclones, and storms, but large areas remain degraded due to historical pressures and require sustained restoration.

Under the Green Tamil Nadu Mission, Muthupet was prioritised and restoration works were undertaken on 200 hectares. "Scientific methods such as linear planting and the use of tidal hydrology were applied to ensure survival and natural regeneration. Around 5,000 saplings were planted," a government official said.

RSS@100: From small shakhas to nat'l influence

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

On the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami — September 27, 1925, Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, popularly known as Doctorji, told a small gathering in Nagpur, "We are inaugurating Sangh today, all of us must train ourselves physically, intellectually, and in every way to be capable of achieving our cherished goal."

On April 17, 1926, the name Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) came into being, and soon shakhas started coming up.

From a small group of volunteers, the RSS has grown into an organisation whose influence has spread far and wide.

Dr Hedgewar was the first sarsanghchalak - presiding over the activities for around 14 years, till his death in 1940. He was followed by Madhav Sadashivrao Golwalkar, popularly known as Guruji. He was at the helm for around 32 years.

Volunteers of RSS participate in a 'Path Sanchalan' march to mark the centenary year of RSS, in Meerut. PTI

Doctorji and Guruji shaped the ideology and the thought process of the RSS and the larger Sangh Parivar.

From 17 persons in 1925, RSS now has over 80,000 daily shakhas and innumerable members.

Over the decades, the RSS — the ideological fountainhead of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and now Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) — has played a central role in shaping India's socio-political landscape.

For the centenary celebrations on October 2, former President Ram Nath Kovind will be the chief guest.

The RSS identifies itself as a cultural organisation, with a stated goal of promoting discipline, character building, and national pride. However, its critics argue that the Sangh's vision of cultural nationalism has at times led to polarisation.

"The RSS continues its grassroots activities — from relief work during natural disasters to educational initiatives in rural areas. This is evidence of its commitment to nation-building beyond politics," said Dilip Deodhar, a Nagpur-based RSS researcher.

Dr Mohan Bhagwat, in recent speeches, has emphasised that the centenary is not merely a celebration of the past but an opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to the service of society and the nation.

As the Sangh Parivar enters its second century, its role in India's evolving democracy will remain a subject of both support and scrutiny.

15 judges recuse from cases involving IFS officer Chaturvedi

He has been fighting service-related and defamation cases for over a decade

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

In a very unusual development, as many as 15 judges have recused from hearing cases related to Uttarakhand-cadre IFS officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi.

A senior Uttarakhand High Court judge, Justice Ravindra Maithani, is the latest to have recused from hearing a contempt case filed by Chaturvedi against Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) Members and registry for "wilful disobedience of its stay order".

The development has come as a record of sorts in the country's judicial history, as never have so many judges recused from hearing cases related to a particular person.

The order passed by Justice Maithani on September 26 read: "List before another Bench of which I (Ravindra Maithani, J) am not a member". Notably, the order does not mention any reason for recusal.

Justice Maithani is the third Uttarakhand HC judge to recuse from hearing a case involving Chaturvedi: Justice Rakesh Thapliyal opted out of hearing a case related to an appraisal report in May 2023, and Justice Manoj Tiwari in his Central deputation case in February 2024.

None of the judges mentioned any reason in the recusal order.

This is the fourth judicial recusal this year in a case involving Chaturvedi, with two CAT judges — Harvinder Oberai and B Anand — recusing in February and ACJM Neha Kushwaha withdrawing from hearing the matter in April.

So far, two Supreme Court judges — Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice U U Lalit — as well as three HC judges, two lower-court judges, and eight CAT judges, including a tribunal chairman, have recused from hearing cases involving Chaturvedi.

This April, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) Neha Kushwaha had recused from a defamation case filed by Chaturvedi against CAT judge Manish Garg, citing her "previous family relations" with another CAT judge, D S Mahra.

In February, a division bench of the CAT consisting of Harvinder Oberai and B Anand recused themselves by simply directing the Registry not to list cases involving Chaturvedi before them in future.

In 2018, the Uttarakhand HC ordered that service matters of Chaturvedi be heard at only the Nainital Circuit Bench, and imposed a cost of Rs 25,000 on the Central government, which the apex court upheld.

Court repeats its position

In 2021, the high court repeated its earlier position, which the Central government challenged before the apex court.

In March 2023, a Supreme Court division bench referred the matter to a larger bench.

In November 2013, then Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjan Gogoi, retired as CJI, recused from a case filed by Chaturvedi demanding a CBI investigation into the role of then Haryana Chief Minister Bhupender Singh Hooda and other senior politicians and bureaucrats in various corruption cases exposed by him, as well as his harassment. In August 2016, then Supreme Court judge Justice U U Lalit had also recused from this case.

In April 2018, a Shimla court judge recused from a defamation case filed against Chaturvedi.

In March 2019, the then CAT Delhi chairman, Justice L Narasimhan Reddy, recused from cases related to various transfer petitions of Chaturvedi, citing certain "unfortunate developments".

In February 2021, another judge of CAT Delhi, Justice R N Singh also recused himself from hearing a service matter case of Chaturvedi.

In November 2023, a Bench of CAT Judges consisting of Mr Manish Garg and C Roul had also recused from hearing his cases.

Zubeen's kin files plaint with Assam CID, seeks probe into his death

GUWAHATI, PTI: The family of Assam's cultural icon Zubeen Garg filed a complaint with the state CID over his death by drowning in Singapore, seeking a probe into the incident.

Garg's uncle Manoj Kumar Borthakur, a signatory in the complaint, said that they had sent it to the CID through email on Saturday.

"We want a thorough probe into the circumstances leading to Zubeen's death," he said.

Garg's wife Garima and his sister Palme Borthakur are the other signatories.

"We have sought an investigation into those present on the yacht trip during which the fatal incident occurred, organiser of North East India Festival Shyamkanu Mahanta and others who may be associated with the incident," another family member of Garg said.

The singer's family also urged the police to take steps to secure the copyrights of the creative works of Garg.

A senior police officer said, "We have received a complaint from Garg's family and are examining it."

Godman Chaitanyananda sent to five-day police custody

LUCKNOW, DHNS & PTI: A Delhi court on Sunday remanded Chaitanyananda Saraswati, a self-styled godman and a sexual harassment accused, to five days' police custody for questioning.

Saraswati, 62, was nabbed from a hotel in Uttar Pradesh's Agra town at around 3.30 am.

According to police sources, a team from Delhi police raided the hotel at midnight on Saturday and arrested Saraswati.

Sources said that Chaitanyananda had checked in at the hotel in the Tajganj area in the name of Swami Parth Sarathi.

The hotel staff said he had arrived at the hotel on Saturday afternoon with a local resident and used his Aadhaar as his Id.

Sources said that the police had recovered some devices and fake IDs from his room.

Investigators said Chaitanyanand and his associates falsely projected proximity to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

His aides allegedly made calls to various people claiming he had links with the PMO, which enabled him to secure support and cooperation while evading the authorities, a senior police officer said.

Chaitanyananda, reportedly the 'director' of a private Management Institute in Delhi's Vasant Kunj area, is accused of sexually harassing 17 women.

Self-styled godman Chaitanyananda Saraswati being produced at the Patiala House Court in New Delhi. PTI

A complaint by an alumnus was filed against him in Delhi stating that he used to send obscene text messages to women and has sexually harassed many.

According to reports, an air force officer had also sent an e-mail to the institute containing complaints by many students, who were from the families of the Air Force personnel. It was also alleged that the Saraswati had installed cameras in the rooms at the women's hostel in the institute.

TV child actor, brother killed in house fire in Kota

KOTA, PTI: Eight-year-old television actor Veer Sharma, who played Pushkal in SonySAB's *Shrimad Ramayan*, and his brother died allegedly due to suffocation after a fire broke out at their home in Rajasthan's Kota.

Police said Veer and his brother Shoriya Sharma (16), an engineering aspirant, were alone at home when the fire erupted.

Their father Jitendra Sharma, who teaches at a coaching centre, was attending a bhajan event and mother actor Rita Sharma was in Mumbai at the time of the incident that happened at around 2 am on Sunday, they said.

Kota (city) SP Tejeshwani Goutam, who visited the spot on Sunday morning, said a short-circuit is suspected to have caused the blaze.

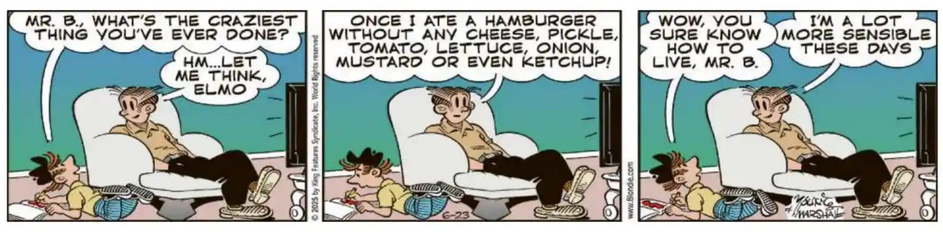
The fire broke out in the drawing room of the flat and the children, who were sleeping, most likely died of suffocation caused by smoke, as fire did not spread to other rooms, the SP said.

An FIR has been registered under section 194 of the BNSS Act, and further investigations are underway.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie


MR. B., WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE?
HM...LET ME THINK, ELMO
ONCE I ATE A HAMBURGER WITHOUT ANY CHEESE, PICKLE, TOMATO, LETTUCE, ONION, MUSTARD OR EVEN KETCHUP!
WOW, YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO LIVE, MR. B.
I'M A LOT MORE SENSIBLE THESE DAYS

Hagar The Horrible

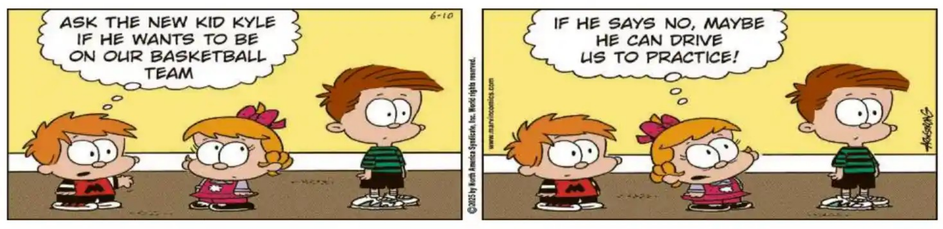
Beetle Bailey

TAKE YOUR ELBOWS OFF THE TABLE, BEETLE
SAYS THE GUY WITH THE BIG FAT FOREARMS
OKAY, OKAY, I'LL MIND MY MANNERS
GREG+MORT WALKER

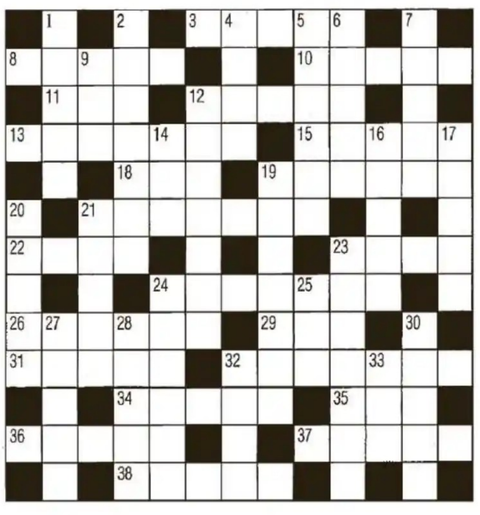
Peanuts

I AM HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO FLATTERY
JUST THE SLIGHTEST COMPLIMENT WILL CAUSE ME TO MELT
OR SO I HAVE ALWAYS IMAGINED
SCHULZ

Marvin



CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12256



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
3 Despite uncertainty, many are declared "out" (5)
8 The C.O., I see, has abdominal trouble (5)
10 A just blow (5)
11 Talk of going ashore? (3)
12 Did it sound the note when the ring rang out? (5)
13 Present at present, but without a place (7)
15 Stop and start the car with no difficulty (5)
18 Catch coming back from the bank (3)
19 Trouble to look around the street (6)
21 It's worrying for Rosie, perhaps, more than us (7)
22 New typist starting in the pool (4)
23 Possibly see about a relaxation (4)
24 Salts, being nautical chaps (7)
26 Classed Edgar, perhaps, as a dunderhead? (6)
29 Jack from Ontario (3)
31 Old Nick rested on one (5)
32 Dissipated ingrate, an Arthurian knight (7)
34 Is it helpful in taking an advisory view? (5)
35 Is there a special gun for this animal? (3)
36 I fool around with a book or manuscript (5)
37 But not a forename for a footballer? (5)
38 Go with the current trend (5)

DOWN
1 Did he write of erotic dancing by a beginner? (5)
2 Are such stockings useful for entrapment? (7)
4 Monster in two Greek tragedies (4)
5 Supportive couples? (6)
6 Can they be set in the business end of the fork? (5)
7 Mad pursuit leads to aches (5)
9 As in Malawi, as a rule? (3)
12 Circulated all round the world (7)
14 Pearl, dear, you actually have more than one (3)
16 Publication in one last edition? (5)
17 What Lancelot did, being a knight errant? (5)
19 A wordy player (7)
20 Hitches a horse in a ship (5)
21 Be overworked in a shop? (5)
23 Far from happy when the grenade exploded (7)
24 Elder Spaniard getting out of line (6)
25 Out of the water, it may be feathered (3)
27 For such stockings, would Nora madly embrace a Yankee? (5)
28 Nominally swindled out of some savings (5)
30 Accustom to being in a large stream (5)
32 Beat up at St Andrews? (4)
33 Hotel in the heart of Greenford (3)

ACROSS
3 Food on a skewer (5)
8 Competitor (5)
10 Prison rooms (5)
11 Alcoholic spirit (3)
12 Of the Pope (5)
13 Rearranged word (7)
15 Puzzle-solving aids (5)
18 Wag (3)
19 Afternoon nap (6)
21 Deep purplish red (7)
22 Squirrel's nest (4)
23 Genuine (4)
24 Shine unsteadily (7)
26 Perfect society (6)
29 Equipment (3)
31 Boy's name (5)
32 Infers (7)
34 Shaving implement (5)
35 Decompose (3)
36 Danger (5)
37 One who pries (5)
38 Underground drain (5)

DOWN
1 Indications (5)
2 Clear a path! (7)
4 Dutch cheese (4)
5 Shrub or small tree (6)
6 Beautiful girl (5)
7 Precipitation (5)
9 By way of (3)
12 Kneecap (7)
14 Manipulate fraudulently (3)
16 Escort (5)
17 Goes by boat (5)
19 Adhesive label (7)
20 Distinctive smell (5)
21 Fruit (5)
23 Goes back (7)
24 Concluding part (6)
25 To tease (3)
27 Drying cloth (5)
28 French capital (5)
30 Attack (3,2)
32 Unemployment benefit (4)
33 Dove's call (3)

SOLUTIONS TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2647

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1 In a row, 4 Ask for it, 9 Fervid, 10 Beginner, 12 Dog-tired, 13 Agenda, 15 Lynx, 16 Bottom line, 19 Over the top, 20 Stab, 23 Fabric, 25 Rhetoric, 27 At a pinch, 28 Apollo, 29 Diligent, 30 Vacant.
DOWN: 1 Infidel, 2 Arrogance, 3 Origin, 5 Step, 6 Fair game, 7 Run on, 8 Terrace, 11 Devotee, 14 Atrophy, 17 Inter alia, 18 Striking, 19 Offhand, 21 Back out, 22 Utopia, 24 Brawl, 26 Scan.

◆SU-DO-KU-6713◆

	8		2	3				6
					6	3	4	
			8				1	5
				1		7		
	3		7		8		2	
		8		2				
8	9				4			
	4	2	5					
6				7	2		9	

hard

SOLUTION TO 6712

8	9	2	3	6	7	5	4	1
5	3	6	4	1	9	8	2	7
4	1	7	8	5	2	6	9	3
9	6	4	5	7	8	1	3	2
1	2	5	6	9	3	7	8	4
3	7	8	2	4	1	9	5	6
7	5	1	9	3	4	2	6	8
2	4	9	7	8	6	3	1	5
6	8	3	1	2	5	4	7	9

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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E1	O1	T1	R1	Y4	T1	P3	Triple Word Score	RACK 1
I1	L1	G2	L1	A1	E1	P3	Triple Word Score	RACK 2
J8	N1	D2	Y4	O1	E1	E1	Triple Word Score	RACK 3
F4	Q10	E1	F4	A1	U1	R1	Triple Word Score	RACK 4

PAR SCORE 255-265
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

L1	U1	G2	G2	E1	D2		RACK 1 =	9
S1	L1	E1	W4				RACK 2 =	15
C3	H4	I1	L1	D2			RACK 3 =	15
A1	C3	R1	E1	A1	G2	E1	RACK 4 =	60

PAR SCORE 65-75 JUDD'S TOTAL 99

HITORI-3167

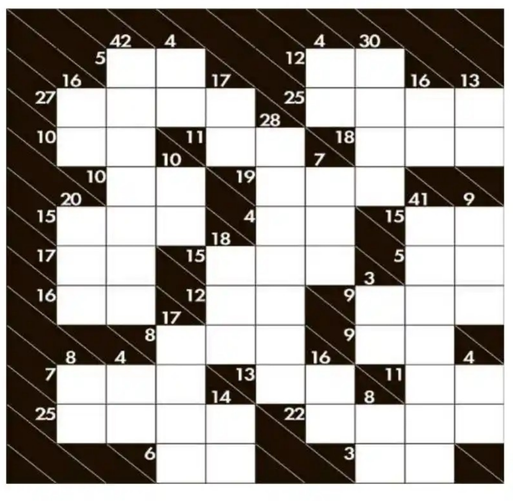
7	1	2	5	7	6	7	7
5	3	7	6	2	7	7	4
6	7	5	3	7	4	2	7
8	6	3	4	1	7	3	7
3	4	1	7	4	5	6	2
2	7	7	2	6	7	5	1
1	5	7	7	3	2	8	7
7	2	7	1	5	4	4	6

SOLUTION TO 3166

4	2	1	7	■	6	3	■
8	■	4	5	7	■	6	1
■	5	6	1	■	3	4	■
7	■	5	3	4	■	2	6
5	1	■	4	■	8	■	3
■	6	3	8	1	2	7	5
6	7	■	2	■	1	■	4
■	4	2	■	5	7	1	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3167



SOLUTION TO 3166

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3691

■	4		1	5			7	■
	■		8				■	
		■	4		3	■		
9			■		■	3		
				■				
7			6		5			
5	1	■				■		3
	9			7			8	
■	3							2

SOLUTION TO 3690

6	3	8	5	1	9	2	4	7
2	9	4	7	6	3	8	1	5
1	5	7	2	8	4	3	6	9
9	1	2	3	7	8	4	5	6
3	4	5	9	2	6	1	7	8
7	8	6	4	5	1	9	2	3
8	2	9	6	4	7	5	3	1
4	6	3	1	9	5	7	8	2
5	7	1	8	3	2	6	9	4

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

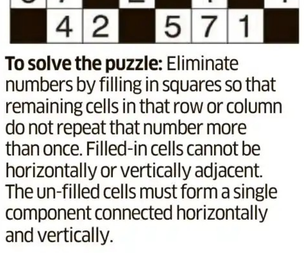
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ACRNH

PWSTE

NEIYWR

GUOTAE


You made it look easy this year!
I don't know how many more birthdays I'll be able to do this. But I love the view too much not to try.
3/22
THE HIKER WHO CLIMBED TO THE SUMMIT EVERY BIRTHDAY WAS GETTING ---

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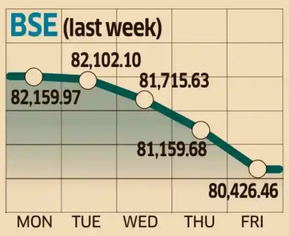
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: LINER METAL IGUANA GOATEE
Answer: They discovered that their new clock was broken — IN NO TIME AT ALL



*Data as of Sep 26

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
MARUTI	2.49%	TECH M	-9.43%
AXISBANK	1.57%	TCS	-8.51%
LT	1.50%	TRENT	-7.84%
		INFY	-5.95%
		ASIAN PAINTS	-5.72%

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
MARUTI	2.66%	TECH M	-9.40%
AXISBANK	1.59%	TATA CON	-8.52%
L&T	1.47%	TRENT	-7.89%
EICHER MOTORS	1.05%	WIPRO	-7.87%
ADANI ENT	0.78%	JIO FIN SER	-6.67%

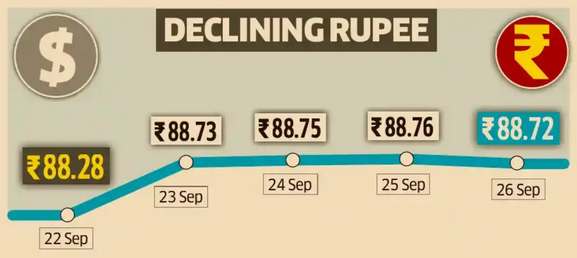
Sensex (52-week)

Sep 26, 2024	Sep 26, 2025	
85,836.12	80,426.46	-6.30%

Nifty (52-week)

Sep 26, 2024	Sep 26, 2025	
26,216.05	24,654.70	-5.96%

10-year Bond yield 6.51%



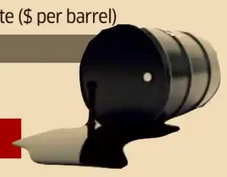
Exchange Rates*

Dollar	₹ 88.72	SGD	₹ 68.77
Pound	₹ 118.49	Yen (100 units)	₹ 59.24
Euro	₹ 103.61		

*Price at which banks sell

Crude Oil Rate ($ per barrel)

BRENT CRUDE
$69.22*
1.02%
*Rate as of Sep 27



Bengaluru fuel pump price*

(Retail)

Petrol*	₹102.92	₹0%
Diesel*	₹90.99	₹0%

*Rates as of Sep 27 #Rate change compared with yesterday

Commodity watch

COFFEE

Category	Rate (Rs per 50 kg)*
Arabica Parchment	₹ 26000 - 26750
Arabica Cherry	₹ 13900 - 15500
Robusta Parchment	₹ 16000 - 17000
Robusta Cherry	₹ 10400 - 11200

*Rates as on Sep 26

Other Commodities

Silkworm cocoon (Rs per kg)*

Bivoltine (BV)	₹ 662
Cross Breed (CB)	₹ 581

*Average rates as on Sep 26

US Tariffs: Sun Pharma exposed to some risk

NEW DELHI, PTI: The imposition of a 100% tariff by the US on imports of branded and patented pharmaceutical products starting October 1 may not significantly hurt Indian drug makers, with Sun Pharma being exposed to some headline risk but with limited earnings impact, according to analysts.

Among Indian companies, only Sun Pharma has sizeable sales from patented drugs in the US (about 17% of 2024-25 revenue), HSBC Global Investment Research said in a report.

The US last week announced the imposition of a 100% tariff on branded or patented drugs entering the United States from October 1, except for pharmaceutical companies building manufacturing plants in the US. The exemption covers projects where construction has started, including sites that have broken ground or are under construction.

HSBC said Sun Pharma reported global sales of $1.217 billion from patented products in FY25, of which the US market accounted for about $1.1 billion (85-90% of global sales).

WeWork India to float Rs 3,000-cr IPO on Oct 3

NEW DELHI, PTI: Co-working major WeWork India is gearing up to launch its initial public offering (IPO) on October 3, with people aware of the matter pegging the issue size to nearly Rs 3,000 crore.

The issue will close on October 7, with bidding for anchor investors opening for a day on October 1, as per the red herring prospectus (RHP).

As per the draft papers, the proposed IPO is entirely an Offer for Sale (OFS) of up to 4.63 crore equity shares. Promoter group firm Embassy Buildcon LLP and investor 1 Ariel Way Tenant Ltd (part of WeWork Global) will offload shares.

Since the issue is an OFS, WeWork India itself will not receive any proceeds from the listing.

Currently, Embassy Group holds about 76.21% in WeWork India, while WeWork Global owns 23.45%.

Established in 2017, WeWork India operates under an exclusive license of the 'WeWork' brand in India and is promoted by the Bengaluru-based real estate major Embassy Group.

AI sweeping habits but firms take baby steps

Indian IT firms navigate an uncertain business environment as AI prompts shift in business models

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA

Global technology industry is in a state of flux. Tariffs imposed by the Trump administration have created significant business uncertainty among enterprises in the world. When companies are navigating such fluidity in the market, rapid adoption of AI (artificial intelligence) is making things trickier. Though dusts of tariff-induced changes will settle sooner or later; AI is bringing in fundamental changes to the technology world. Especially, the very business model of the global IT outsourcing industry is witnessing a shift.

AI and generative AI (GenAI) are automating several tasks, replacing human talent. Billions of dollars are being invested by technology companies of all hues into R&D of AI-related development. Despite the rapid adoption of AI and GenAI tools, questions are being raised over the return potential of such investments. A recent study done by MIT pointed out that only about 5% of AI pilot programmes achieve rapid revenue acceleration with the rest 95% failing to justify the investments. That is the reason why certain scepticism has crept in into the discussions around AI.

Consumer-facing AI picks up momentum

Despite the doubts; AI tools have seen significant adoption among consumers. GenAI tools like ChatGPT, Grok, Gemini and several AI-powered apps have witnessed fast-paced growth in the last two years. For instance, ChatGPT has around 800 million weekly active users as of now. India has the largest ChatGPT users in the world with students leading the race. The country has also seen significant downloads of AI-powered apps. And India is not the only nation driving the userbase. From the US to Europe to Asia, South America, & Australia; users are lapping up the apps.

"AI apps, services, & platforms are becoming like smartphones with people using them as daily essentials now. Video, picture, voice notes, and several other things have come into our daily lives in a new way. These have in many ways changed our habits. Therefore, adoption of AI has already increased and the pace is expected to be faster than any other technology that the mankind has ever seen," Aditya Narayan Mishra, MD & CEO of CIEL HR told *DH*.

No wonder, fintech, edtech, medtech, consumer-tech and several other consumer-facing business apps have come to the fore in recent years with millions using those on daily basis.

Enterprise adoption remains slow

While consumers have started using AI apps as a habit, enterprise use cases are growing at a slow pace. Though it always has been the trend, the hype around AI had raised hopes of bucking of this trend. However, industry experts opined that businesses globally are taking a cautious approach in integrating AI into their processes.

"Enterprise AI has had limited success. The pace of development in consumer AI has been far greater than the impact on enterprise AI. Despite massive potential, enterprises are plagued by rudimentary processes, lack of data readiness, varied and complex technology footprint, and a conventional culture," Ashish Chaturvedi, Executive Research Leader at HFS Research said.

"We are seeing only 15% of all POCs (proof of concepts) making it to production. Interestingly, most of these 15% are also mostly co-pilot implementations, or simple agents created over existing RPA bots. We are still scratching the surface and are yet to see high-value Agentic AI orchestration use cases across most enterprises," he added.

Overall business environment is not supporting a full-throttle push towards AI by the enterprises. Pareekh Jain, Founder of Pareekh Consulting said that an adverse macroenvironment is not lending a helping hand towards faster AI adoption.

"Enterprises are struggling in macro environment and don't have full budget to scale AI. AI will need further investment in cloud and data for AI readiness," Jain said.

No wonder, investors have been a worried lot over huge investments flowing into the AI space without accompanying returns. Tech giants like Meta, Amazon, Alphabet, Microsoft, Apple, Tesla, and Nvidia are likely to spend around $320 billion on AI and data centres in 2025. Such huge investments demand quick returns, failing which stock prices will correct.

Indian IT industry's resilience put to test

As the technology world sees sweeping changes driven by AI, Indian IT industry is facing another tech cycle with far-reaching impact. And the impact this time is on its established operating model. Indian IT firms traditionally rely on T&M (time and materials) in which billing happens per hour per resource. AI is bringing in a shift in this model to more outcome-based. Though domestic IT companies are increasingly executing more outcome-based project, T&M still holds a significant share. Moreover, AI-led productivity is poised to cannibalise a part of their revenues in coming years.

Another significant risk is coming from demand for workforce optimisation. Global tech giants like Microsoft, Google, Meta and several others have laid off thousands of staffers since last year. Earlier, TCS has said that it would cut over 12,000 jobs. Last week, Accenture's Q4 results showed 11,000 job reduction during the quarter with the company embarking on a business optimisation programme. In this perspective, Indian IT firms have to carve a delicate balance between AI-led developments, shift in business model and employee well-being in an increasingly uncertain business environment.

(The writer is a Bengaluru-based technology journalist)

South India accounts for 58% of all India whiskey sales in FY25

Karnataka leads chart with 17% share

NEW DELHI, PTI

South Indian states dominate the sales of IMFL, accounting for 58% revenue in FY25, with Karnataka retaining the top national slot by contributing 17% of the pan-India volumes in FY25, according to data from industry body CIABC.

Five Southern states - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, along with Union Territory Puducherry, have retained their dominance in the sales of the Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), consuming 23.18 crore cases (jointly contributing 58% sales) for the financial year ended on March 31, 2025.

"South's dominance is near-absolute" in IMFL sales in FY25, with "the rest of India shares the remaining 42 per cent", said data sourced from the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC).

However, on the pan-India level, sales volume of IMFL Whisky has slowed to 1.4% in FY25 to 40.17 crore cases. It was 39.62 crore cases in FY24.

When asked, CIABC Director General Anant S Iyer said overall sales have been slow in FY25 due to a weak Q1 last year, primarily on account of the general elections and excise policy issues in some states, which impacted volumes.

"We have been constantly in touch with the state governments, raising our concerns regarding these Excise policy issues. Every year, we see a significant hike in state levies and policy changes, which impact sales in the short to medium term," Iyer told PTI.

Regulators use the term IMFL, which includes Whisky, Vodka, Rum, Gin and Brandy, to distinguish it from country liquor and traditional alcoholic beverages such as toddy, fenny, and arrack, among others.

Karnataka, with 6.88 crore cases, has again topped the chart, contributing 17% of IMFL volume sales, followed by Tamil Nadu at the second position with 6.47 crore cases, accounting for nearly 16 per cent of the national sales.

In FY24, Karnataka was in the lead position with consumption of 6.83 crore cases, while Tamil Nadu ranked second, registering sales of 6.44 crore cases.

Telangana and Andhra Pradesh contributed around 9% each of the IMFL sales with 3.71 crore and 3.55 crore cases, respectively, in FY25. Kerala ranked seventh with 2.29 crore cases in IMFL sales, according to CIABC data.

The Southern region has an overall growth of nearly 1% in sales volume. Interestingly, Puducherry reported 10% growth in FY25 with 0.28 crore cases, ranking 19th.

The southern part was followed by the northern region, which contributed 20% of IMFL sales, where Uttar Pradesh was leading the chart with 2.50 crore cases.

On the national level, Uttar Pradesh was ranked sixth with a 6% growth rate. It was followed by Rajasthan, Delhi and Haryana, which were ranked 9th, 10th and 11th in IMFL sales with 1.37 crore cases, 1.18 crore cases and 1.17 crore cases, respectively.

Overall, the northern region reported only 1% growth in FY25 in IMFL sales.

The western region contributed 12 per cent of IMFL sales with 4.70 crore cases, where Maharashtra topped the list with the consumption of 2.71 crore cases. Maharashtra has been ranked fifth in terms of sales, contributing 58% of the western region sales with a 4% annual growth. The western region reported 3% growth in IMFL sales in FY25.

The eastern region accounted for only 10% of IMFL sales, where West Bengal led the chart with 1.49 crore cases. West Bengal ranked 8th pan-India with a 4 per cent growth in FY25. It was followed by Odisha, Assam and Jharkhand, with 0.98 crore cases, 0.96 crore cases and 0.32 crore cases, respectively.

In Punjab and J&K, IMFL sales were down 20% and 15%, respectively, in FY25. Markets like Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Puducherry reported 15%, 13% and 10% growth, respectively.

India is the largest whisky market globally by volume, which is witnessing premiumisation.

Modi, Starmer to take trade talks ahead next month

MUMBAI, DHNS

More than two months after India and United Kingdom signed a landmark free trade agreement to boost bilateral trade by eliminating tariffs on cars, textiles, whisky and range of other products, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and British Premier Keir Starmer will address the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2025 in Mumbai next month.

The conference is scheduled for October 7-9, 2025, at the Jio World Centre in Mumbai.

The presence of the two prime ministers in the GFF 2025, the world's largest fintech conference, comes at a time when the United States President Donald Trump has been increasing tariffs which has come as a shocker for New Delhi.

In fact, during the visit, Modi is also set to commission the Navi Mumbai International Airport and inaugurate the full length of Colaba–Bandra-SEEPZ Metro Line, popularly known as Aqua Line, which runs underground through the twin districts of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is also slated to address the fintech conference.

"The presence of two visionary world leaders will galvanise the Global Fintech Fest into a thought leadership platform to map a sustainable path for equitable progress for the entire humanity, and to reshape finance to be more inclusive, agile, and resilient. The UK and India share one of the most dynamic economic relationships in the world," said Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, Axilor Ventures and Co-founder, Infosys, and the Chairman of the GFF 2025 Advisory Council.

Policymakers, central bankers, industry captains, investors, and academicians will deliberate on how to leverage fintech to build a better world, in alignment with the overarching theme of GFF 2025: 'Empowering finance for a better world powered by AI'.

GFF will also see participation from renowned international regulators such as the Monetary Authority of Singapore, the Deutsche Bundesbank of the Federal Republic of Germany, Banque de France, and the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority FINMA.

Among others who will address GFF 2025 are Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs; Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Railways and Information & Broadcasting; Sanjay Malhotra, Governor, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairperson, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

Insights from financial ecosystem experts will be at the heart of the conference. However, GFF 2025 is designed to be much more than just speaking sessions. A special attraction of the conference this year will be the Bharat AI Experience Zone by NPCI and NVIDIA. This will be a dedicated space to showcase credible, cutting-edge AI innovations through live demonstrations by leading deep-tech companies. Top AI innovators will showcase how AI is transforming finance and beyond, while engaging with global leaders, potential clients, and partners.

There will also be a huge expo, with more than 400 exhibitors showcasing the latest in fintech.

DH INTERVIEW

'Agentic AI unlocks new business models for IT firms'

Agentic AI helps businesses move faster by reducing the time it takes to understand information and make decisions, said **Ashvin Vellody**, Partner, Deloitte India. Also, for IT firms, agentic AI unlocks new business models. In an interaction with **Uma Kannan** of *DH*, Vellody, whose focus areas include consulting companies across industries reimagine digital experiences, shape digital strategy and embed AI in their enterprise, spoke about GenAI and challenges that organisations face in implementing agentic AI. His current areas of interest are in Generative and Agentic AI. Edited excerpts:

What kind of role can agentic AI play in the growth of companies, especially IT companies?

Agentic AI is redefining how companies—especially IT services firms—approach growth and transformation. Rather than focusing on isolated use cases, the real opportunity lies in solving classes of problems by 'agentising' entire process flows. This involves stitching together multiple single-purpose agents that collaborate to deliver outcomes across a workflow.

For IT firms, this unlocks new business models centred around IP-led, product-driven services. It also reimagines how services are sold—moving from effort-based pricing to outcome-based engagements—and transforms delivery by enabling humans and agents to work as a team. These agents accelerate speed-to-market, reduce duplication, and improve win rates by up to 30%. For example, a global manufacturer has deployed agents to detect shipment distress and autonomously handle support tickets, while a consumer enterprise has streamlined procurement through multi-agent orchestration.

Are there any challenges in implementing agentic AI?

Yes, there are several practical challenges that companies must navigate when implementing agentic AI. The first is data—many organisations don't have clean, structured, or accessible data to support agent workflows. The second is integration. Most enterprises have legacy systems, fragmented APIs (Application Programming Interface), and siloed platforms, which make it difficult for agents to operate end-to-end. The third is security and governance. Since agents can take autonomous actions, companies need strong controls to prevent errors, hallucinations, or compliance risks. There's also a softer challenge: change management.

Business teams often hesitate to adopt agentic AI because the value isn't immediately visible, and the shift in roles can feel disruptive.

What differentiates agentic AI from traditional automation and GenAI implementations?

The real difference lies in how agentic AI is designed to solve business problems. Traditional automation focuses on repetitive tasks. GenAI is great for generating content or summarising information. Agentic AI goes a step further—it's built to solve entire workflows by stitching together multiple agents, each with a specific purpose. These agents don't just respond; they plan, reason, and act. For example, in a customer onboarding process, one agent might validate documents, another might update systems, and a third might trigger follow-ups. Together, they deliver a complete outcome. This modular approach allows companies to reuse agents across different processes and scale faster. It's not about building one-off bots—it's about creating a system of agents that can work together, adapt to business logic, and deliver measurable results. That's what makes agentic AI a game-changer for enterprise transformation.

Ashvin Vellody, Partner, Deloitte India

How can businesses accelerate outcomes and compress time-to-value across functions like marketing, finance and customer service?

Agentic AI helps businesses move faster by reducing the time it takes to understand information and make decisions. When agents are deployed across a process, they can run continuously, handle tasks in parallel, and eliminate manual bottlenecks. This leads to faster execution and quicker realisation of value. For example, in finance, agents can handle reconciliations, reviews, and reporting with minimal human intervention. In marketing, agents can automate campaign QA and performance tracking. A global enterprise used agentic AI to streamline procurement by deploying multiple agents that worked together across sourcing, approvals, and vendor management. The secret is to build a central library of agents that can be reused across functions, and to set up cross-functional teams that can rapidly prototype and deploy solutions. When done right, agentic AI creates a multiplier effect across the business.

What challenges do organisations face when integrating agentic AI without causing fragmentation or bottlenecks?

The biggest risk in scaling agentic AI is fragmentation. If different teams build agents in silos, without a common architecture or governance model, it leads to duplication, integration issues, and inconsistent performance. Companies need a central design authority to guide how agents are built, deployed, and managed. This includes standardising tools, platforms, and DevOps practices. Without it, agents may not talk to each other, or worse, they may conflict. A global consumer company avoided this by creating a centralised platform and a library of reusable agents, which allowed different business units to plug into a common framework. Another challenge is prioritisation—without a value hub to track ROI and align efforts, teams may chase low-impact use cases. The solution is to treat agentic AI as a horizontal capability, with clear governance, shared infrastructure, and a focus on solving business-critical problems.

TOP PICKS

The data is sourced from Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited

SBIN
(ID: SBIN)
BUY
Upside +17%**
Last close ₹857
Target: ₹1,000*

Swiggy
(ID: Swiggy)
BUY
Upside +34%**
Last close ₹419
Target: ₹560*

Aditya Birla Capital
(ID: ABCAPITAL)
BUY
Upside +21%**
Last close ₹280
Target: ₹340*

Larsen & Tubro
(ID: LT)
BUY
Upside +12%**
Last close ₹3,743
Target: ₹4,200*

Maruti Suzuki
(ID: MARUTI)
BUY
Upside +10%**
Last close ₹16,307
Target: ₹17,890*

* Target price has been calculated on the basis of fundamentals ** Upside refers to more value stock is expected to generate than its current price

Gold and silver: why two old metals still matter

PRATIK OSWAL
CHIEF OF PASSIVE BUSINESS, MOTILAL OSWAL AMC

Investors look for assets that can hold their ground when the world feels uncertain. Gold and silver have done that job for centuries, across very different monetary systems and market regimes. Their roles are not identical. Gold is widely seen as a store of value and a hedge against policy or currency risk. Silver is more cyclical because a large part of its demand comes from industry. Together, they remain relevant for portfolios that value diversification and risk control.

Over the past 25 years the two metals have moved through clear phases. From 2000 to 2011, both delivered strong gains as inflation concerns rose and the dollar weakened during the Global Financial Crisis. Between 2012 and 2018, returns were muted. Gold broadly preserved value while silver lagged as industrial demand softened. Since 2019, gold has made new highs amid inflation, geopolitics and steady official sector interest. Silver has recovered but remained more volatile, reflecting its link to manufacturing cycles.

One feature of this cycle has been central bank buying of gold. In 2023, official sector purchases crossed one thousand tonnes, among the highest annual totals on record. Over the past three years, net buying has averaged close to nine hundred tonnes per year, compared with a longer run average near three hundred and fifty tonnes. This steady accumulation has supported prices and highlights the role of gold as a portfolio reserve for countries managing currency and inflation risks.

Silver's story is tied to the energy and technology transition. Demand from solar, electric vehicles, semiconductors and advanced electronics has grown meaningfully. Industrial usage is projected to exceed seven hundred million ounces by 2025. Over two decades the industrial share of silver demand has risen from about 40% to more than 55%. This shift points to uses that are less discretionary and often less sensitive to short term price moves.

Supply has been tight, especially in silver. Global mine output has declined by nearly 70 million ounces since 2016. Recycling has also slowed due to longer product life cycles, fewer returns of old electronics and lower policy support in some regions. These factors reduce the ability of recycled metal to offset weaker mine supply and have contributed to reported deficits in the physical market. Absent fresh investment, supply remains under pressure.

A simple way to compare the two metals is the gold to silver ratio. The long term average is about 68 while the recent level is near 87, which is historically elevated. When the ratio has been this high in the past, later periods have often seen silver outperform gold. This is a historical observation and not a forecast. Ratios can remain away from average for extended periods, and investors should treat them as context rather than a signal.

What does all this mean for portfolios. Gold tends to act as ballast in periods of policy uncertainty or financial stress. Silver can add cyclicality and exposure to the clean energy build out but with higher volatility. In diversified allocations, the two can play different roles. Sizing, rebalancing and investment vehicle selection should follow each investor's objectives, costs and risk tolerance.

As the global economy navigates rising inflation, geopolitical uncertainty, and a shift toward cleaner technologies, gold and silver have re-emerged as critical pillars of resilience and relevance. Gold, backed by record central bank buying and investor flows, continues to serve as a trusted hedge against financial instability. Silver, once tied to photography, is now firmly anchored in the future—powering solar panels, electric vehicles, and semiconductors.

Yet, while demand is rising rapidly, supply remains under pressure. Falling mine output, moderating recycling activity, and shrinking inventories are tightening both markets. Whether as a store of value or an industrial essential, gold and silver are no longer just historical assets—they are timely tools for a world in transition.

Market cap of top-10 firms drops by Rs 2.99 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, PTI: The combined market valuation of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by Rs 2,99,661.36 crore last week, in line with a bearish trend in equities, with IT bellwether Tata Consultancy Services taking the biggest hit.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 2,199.77 points or 2.66%.

"A sharp hike in H-1B visa fees led to heavy unwinding in technology stocks, while also pressuring the Indian rupee, which slipped to a record low against the US dollar.

"Adding to the headwinds, the imposition of 100% tariffs on branded and patented pharmaceutical imports to the US further dampened sentiment, with ripple effects felt across multiple sectors and weighing heavily on market confidence," Ponmudi R, CEO – Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

The market valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) tumbled Rs 97,597.91 crore to Rs 10,49,281.56 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

Reliance Industries' valuation eroded by Rs 40,462.09 crore to Rs 18,64,436.42 crore.

Infosys lost Rs 38,095.78 crore from its market valuation, which stood at Rs 6,01,805.25 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank tanked by Rs 33,032.97 crore to Rs 14,51,783.29 crore, and that of ICICI Bank dived Rs 29,646.78 crore to Rs 9,72,007.68 crore.

Bharti Airtel's valuation fell by Rs 26,030.11 crore to Rs 10,92,922.53 crore, and that of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) diminished by Rs 13,693.62 crore to Rs 5,51,919.30 crore.

The mcap of Hindustan Unilever dropped by Rs 11,278.04 crore to Rs 5,89,947.12 crore, and that of Bajaj Finance declined by Rs 4,977.99 crore to Rs 6,12,914.73 crore.

The market valuation of State Bank of India dipped by Rs 4,846.07 crore to Rs 7,91,063.93 crore.

Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued firm, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and LIC.

Missed Sept 16 due date? You can still file your ITR

Due to e-filing portal's continuous technical glitches, non-tax audit return filers were not able to file their returns

PRABHAKAR K S

As anticipated, the High Courts were flooded with petitions seeking extension of due dates for filing the income tax returns. On September 24, the Rajasthan and Karnataka High Courts, in their interim orders, directed the CBDT to extend the tax audit report filing date from September 30 to October 31, 2025.

On September 25, the CBDT extended the due date for filing the audit report accordingly. On September 26, the Gujarat High Court also directed that the tax-audit return due date be extended from October 31 to November 30. Similar orders are expected from other High Courts as well. Wait! Despite technical glitches since August last week, the above extensions are being granted only for those taxpayers subject to tax audit, and not for others.

Due date missed, still you can file your Return

If a non-tax audit return filer missed the September 16 due date (extended from the actual due date of July 31), he or she is still eligible to file a belated return on or before December 31, 2025. By doing so, they can avoid severe consequences for non-compliance, but only to some extent, not fully. Since the 'Original Return' is to be filed after the due date but three months before the end of the relevant assessment year, it is called a belated return.

Consequences for not filing

For not filing, with or without the taxpayers' own fault, they are subject to the following penalties and other consequences.

Compulsory new regime: Due to the missing of the due date, a taxpayer will not be allowed to choose tax regimes as per his own whims and fancies. That is, he/she should choose the new default regime compulsorily and forgo all the available exemptions and deductions, such as HRA, LTA, housing loan interest, though eligible and may end up with additional tax outgo. In addition, he/she cannot carry forward any losses incurred from business/profession and capital gains. However, unabsorbed depreciation and loss from house property are allowed.

Reduced interest on tax refunds: Late filers will fetch lesser interest on their refunds, compared to those who filed on or before September 16, 2025. Their 'interest on tax refund', if any, will be computed from the date of filing of the return, for instance, those who filed the return with a refund of Rs 10,000/- on or after September 17, will fetch less interest that is only from the date of filing the return till the date of processing it and not from April 1, 2025.

Interest on unpaid tax: The taxpayer is liable for an interest on unpaid income tax at 1% per month or part thereof. Also, interest on the shortfall/late payment of advance tax is attracted separately.

Late Fee: They are liable for late filing fees of Rs 1,000 for taxpayers whose total income is not more than Rs 5 lakh during the FY 2024-25 and Rs 5,000 for those whose total income exceeds Rs 5 lakh.

Prosecution: In certain cases, a taxpayer may be punishable with imprisonment of three months to seven years and a fine.

Suggestion to the finance ministry

As we move from the 1961 Act to the 2025 Act, the four-year-old new e-filing portal 2.0 is again required to be recalibrated fully as per the new income tax sections, rules and forms. A revisit on 'returns current due dates' and change them to August 31, 2026, for non-tax audit cases and October 31, 2026, for both submission of tax audit reports and returns will ensure a smooth transition.

Reason: Given the last four years' worst experience faced by taxpayers as well as tax professionals, no one has confidence that the portal will handle the huge traffic congestion of about 7-8 crore returns in the July-Oct 2026 filing season.

Suggestion to the taxpayers

The taxpayers' own casual behaviour of filing their returns only during the last one to two weeks or the final day is also clogging the portal. It is high time for them to change their behaviour for their own sake, take the annual tax compliance job seriously, and start submitting their returns from the second week of June after reconciling their data with Form 16/16A, Form 26AS, AIS and other records instead of waiting for the last week or day or court-directed extensions.

Since India is aiming to become the third largest economy by 2028, compelling a taxpayer to approach courts even for simple due date extensions every year, collecting late fee over and above the tax for not their faults, without providing a smooth filing portal, not fixing accountability on the CBDT for not timely releasing of ITR forms and utilities, e-filing portal service provider- Infosys and non- conducting an independent third-party audit of the e-filing system does not augur well. Does the CBDT expect repetition of the cycle of approaching the courts for reliefs and embarrassments from the judiciary even in 2047 Vikasita Bharat?

(The writer is Founder & CEO, Shree Tax Chambers)

THE WEEK AHEAD

RBI interest rate decision to guide markets this week

Last week, Nifty50 declined by 672 points

SIDDAHARTHA KHEMKA

This week, Indian equities are likely to see weakness as investor sentiments are hit by the recent announcements from the US, including hike in the H-1B visa fees and levy of 100% tariff on branded pharma imports, which weighed on the Indian IT and pharma sectors respectively. On the domestic front, we expect continued momentum in the consumption space after festive demand picked up pace with the start of Navratri wherein auto companies (incl. Maruti, Hyundai) reported record bookings on day one. In terms of macro-economic data, markets will track RBI's interest rate decision on October 1, the US consumer confidence data and Manufacturing PMI of India, China, and US for September 2025.

Also, markets on Monday would react to the US retail inflation data which was released post market-hours on Friday. Meanwhile, primary markets would continue to see heightened activity with 4 main-board and 15 SME IPOs opening for subscription together-with 11 new listings this week.

Last week, Nifty50 declined by 672 points to close at 24,655 (-2.7%), its worst weekly fall in six months. The Indian markets have been adversely affected by both the pharmaceutical sector tariff announcement and the H-1B visa modifications. The broader markets underperformed, with Nifty Midcap100 and Nifty Smallcap100 falling by 4.6% and 5.1% respectively.

All sectoral indices ended in the red, with Nifty IT, Realty and Pharma leading the declines with loss of 8%, 6% and 5% respectively. Pharma stocks fell sharply, after the US announced a 100% tariff on imports of branded drugs from October 1, unless the manufacturer has a production facility in the US. The weakness in currency continued with rupee maintaining levels above its record low of 88.7975 versus the US dollar. Adding to the pressure, sustained FII selling (Rs 13,882 crore outflows) weighed on market sentiments.

In a global development, President Trump signed an executive order raising the annual H-1B visa application fee from $1,000 to $100,000 per applicant—a 100x increase, applicable prospectively to new applications. While the program's structure remains unchanged, the steep fee hike will significantly raise employer costs, with the first impact likely visible in FY27 petitions.

While the H-1B program is often portrayed as an 'India IT' visa channel, in practice, Big Tech companies (Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, etc.) account for a larger share of fresh applications than Indian IT. Indian IT vendors, with localisation and subcontracting already part of their models, are relatively better positioned to adapt. Consequently, the net effect on medium-term profitability is likely to be largely neutral, reinforcing the sector's long-term business resilience.

With most sectors under pressure, we remain positive on PSU banks, which continue to demonstrate fundamental strength with RoA sustaining above 1% and sector profitability reaching a record Rs 1.5 trillion. We expect a 14% CAGR in aggregate earnings over FY26–28E, supported by recovering margins, rising fee income, moderating costs, and strong coverage (PCR ₹79%), keeping RoA steady at 1.0–1.1%.

PSBs have also regained credit momentum, with FY25 loan growth (12%) surpassing private banks (10%) for the first time in 15 years, aided by strong deposit franchises, conservative CD ratios, and traction in RAM segments. With RoE steady at 18–19%, valuations remain attractive. Backed by strong balance sheets, improving efficiency, and stable asset quality, we anticipate that PSBs are well-positioned for a re-rating.

We remain constructive on the Defence sector, as recent policy initiatives including TPCR-2025 roadmap and strong order inflows reinforce its multi-year growth trajectory. The government's push for indigenisation under Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India, coupled with record-high defence exports, is driving structural demand for domestic manufacturers. Large order wins by leading players across platforms—from aircraft and missiles to electronics and shipbuilding—provide long-term revenue visibility. With India's defence budget continuing to rise and private participation gaining traction, the sector is well-positioned to deliver strong earnings growth.

(The writer is Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd)

SHATTERED DREAMS

The H-1B Visa reset will crush America's college pipeline

ANDY MUKHERJEE
BLOOMBERG OPINION

Before the ink is dry on his chaotic plan to charge employers a fat fee for hiring foreigners, President Donald Trump may end up choking off the very pipeline through which young overseas students trickle into the American job market: College education.

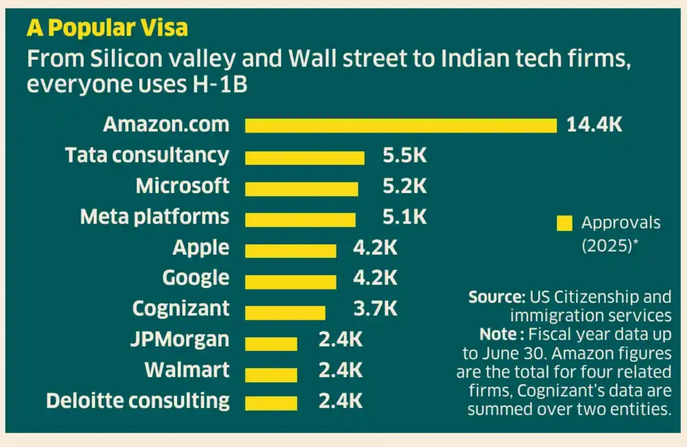
Last week's hastily imposed Restriction on Entry of Certain Non-immigrant Workers opened a new front in Washington's increasingly ugly trade spat with New Delhi. Indian techies and doctors, who hold more than 70% of the existing visas under this category, read the move as an eviction notice from their careers and lives in the US. Or at least that's how Trump's proclamation was received, until the White House clarified that a one-time $100,000 fee on H-1B visas would only apply to employers of new applicants — and doctors may be exempt.

That was last week. A separate proposal, announced Tuesday, seeks to overhaul the H-1B lottery itself by introducing a wage-based rule into what is currently a random process. The rejig goes way beyond targeting India, or for that matter, the $100,000 fee. Once implemented, it would dim the appeal of the F-1 student visa — a far more crucial source of America's long-term competitiveness than the 85,000-a-year jobs quota. Although damaging the US university system isn't the intended goal, that would be the unfortunate result.

The Department of Homeland Security says it's moving to a weighted selection process that would "favor the allocation of H-1B visas to higher skilled and higher paid aliens." So far, so good. But with demand for these visas exceeding supply each year for more than a decade, the catch lies in the complex manner in which the quota will be distributed. Currently, most of the approvals go to California because tech-industry employers, such as Amazon.com Inc. and India's Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., the largest Indian outsourcing firm, seek them aggressively.

Silicon Valley's dominance might continue even under the new rules, as would the rampant gaming of the H-1B system by outsourcing firms. However, fresh, foreign-born STEM graduates may lose access to the one US talent market where their education and skills are the most valued.

Until now, once they got a job offer and it was time to switch their status from F-1 to H-1B, computer-science graduates had the same chance of getting selected as a mid-career techie from India. Now, they will face an inbuilt bias against their youth. To even put their hat in the ring for a software-development H-1B, their prospective employer will need to offer them a minimum salary of $136,000 in San Francisco county. After they secure this offer, they will face a 4:1 disadvantage in the visa sweepstakes against experienced immigrants coming in to work on artificial intelligence projects at an annual salary of $214,000-plus.


A Popular Visa
From Silicon valley and Wall street to Indian tech firms, everyone uses H-1B
Amazon.com 14.4K
Tata consultancy 5.5K
Microsoft 5.2K
Meta platforms 5.1K
Apple 4.2K
Google 4.2K
Cognizant 3.7K
JPMorgan 2.4K
Walmart 2.4K
Deloitte consulting 2.4K
Approvals (2025)*
Source: US Citizenship and immigration services
Note : Fiscal year data up to June 30. Amazon figures are the total for four related firms, Cognizant's data are summed over two entities.

Naturally, new computer-science graduates will get elbowed out of the Bay Area, or chased out of the US entirely. That's because the revamped lottery would prefer a foreign-born landscape architect at $97,000, the top pay for the profession in Las Vegas. To enjoy the same odds, the freshly minted software developer, if she isn't an American citizen or permanent resident, will need a Vegas job paying $164,000, or a $139,000 offer from Des Moines. (Geography as well as occupation will matter under the plan.)

The US does need aesthetically pleasing golf courses and competitively priced nail salons, but it also must create jobs for Americans at the cutting edge of technology. That's the promise that each young computer scientist implicitly makes to the host society when H-1B allows them to start a career as an executive, startup founder, or researcher. This contract is now broken. Since most international students at four-year US undergraduate programs self-finance their education, the lure of an expensive American science, technology, engineering, or mathematics degree would plummet under the new rules.

That would be a shame. Every fifth person pursuing a STEM career in the US is foreign-born. The talent pool of more than 7 million is drawn from around the world, but principally from five countries: Mexico, India, China, the Philippines and Vietnam. Not all may have attended a US university on an F-1 visa, but many have.

This will change. The nativist right-wing view in the US supports doing away with practical training, which is how immigrant students get to stay on after finishing their coursework and look for a job. New cohorts will be discouraged, while existing students will start weighing rival offers. Germany's ambassador in India has already taken to social media with a sales pitch. "Our migration policy works a bit like a German car," he says. "It is reliable, it is modern, it is predictable." Do you think parents in Mumbai or New Delhi, already fearful about US immigration raids, won't relay this message to their children at Brown or Berkeley?

The world's faith in the dollar already appears to be cracking under the weight of the trade war. After the greenback, if there's another piece of paper that's keeping the US economy in pole position, then it's the F-1 visa, acting as a pathway to H-1B, permanent residency, and eventually citizenship. The Trump administration mustn't devalue it.

Trump to attend meeting with top military leaders: Washington Post

REUTERS: President Donald Trump will attend a meeting with U.S. generals and admirals in Quantico, Virginia, on Tuesday, a rare gathering of the country's military leadership in one location, the Washington Post reported on Sunday, citing a planning document.

There was no immediate comment from the White House on Trump attending the meeting.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth is expected to discuss the need to adhere to a "warrior ethos" throughout the military and could touch on other areas during the roughly one-hour-long event, US officials told Reuters on Friday. The US has troops around the world, including in distant locations like South Korea, Japan and across the Middle East -- which are commanded by two-, three- and four-star generals and admirals.

In almost every public speech he gives, Hegseth talks about the "warrior ethos" and the need for the U.S. military to have a warrior mentality.

India-US ties not criteria for Delhi-Moscow relations: Lavrov

'Respect independent foreign policy pursued by PM Modi'

UNITED NATIONS, PTI

Russia fully respects India's national interests and the independent foreign policy being pursued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said, asserting that India's ties with the US or any other country cannot be a benchmark for New Delhi-Moscow ties.

Lavrov, who addressed the UN General Assembly shortly before External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's speech at the high-level General Debate, said India and Russia share a "particularly privileged strategic partnership".

"These situations that might arise between India and the United States or India and any other country, I can't consider them a criteria for relations between India and Russia," he said at a press conference here on Saturday.

Lavrov was responding to a question on India's continued imports of Russian oil despite US pressure on countries to reduce such purchases, and how Moscow views its ties with New Delhi in this context.

"We have full respect for the national interests of India, full respect for the foreign policy that (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi is carrying out to promote these national interests," he said, noting that India and Russia maintain regular high-level contacts.

Lavrov cited the recent meeting between PM Modi and President Vladimir Putin at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in China.

He added that President Putin is expected to visit New Delhi in December.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. PTI

"We have a very extensive bilateral agenda -- trade, military, technical cooperation, finance, humanitarian matters, healthcare, high tech, artificial intelligence -- and of course, close coordination at the international level, within the SCO, BRICS and bilaterally," the Russian leader said.

Lavrov had met with Jaishankar for bilateral discussions on the margins of the 80th session of the UNGA and had also participated in the annual meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/International Relations, chaired by India in its capacity as the incoming Chair for 2026.

Lavrov spoke about bilateral visits and regular exchanges between him and Jaishankar.

"I'm not even asking what is going to happen to our trade relations or oil? I don't ask our Indian colleagues this. They are perfectly capable of making these decisions for themselves," he said.

Referring to Jaishankar's remarks on oil imports, Lavrov said the External Affairs Minister had clearly stated that if the "US wants to sell its oil to us, we are prepared to discuss the terms for this, but what we buy from other countries, not the United States, but from Russia or other countries, that's our own business, and that has nothing to do with the Indian-US agenda".

"That is a very worthy response," he said, adding that it shows that India, like Turkiye, has "self-respect".

In response to another question, Lavrov stressed that the economic partnership between Russia and India is secure.

"There is no threat to this relationship. And if somebody does do something of that nature, the Indian Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, have said it loud and clear, India chooses its own partners," he said.

China sentences former agricultural minister to death

BEIJING, AFP: China's former agricultural minister was sentenced to death on Sunday on corruption charges, with a two-year reprieve, a court statement said.

Tang Renjian accepted cash and property bribes totalling more than 268 million yuan ($38 million) between 2007 and 2024, the People's Court of Changchun in northeast Jilin province said in a statement.

The court ruled that the bribes "caused particularly severe losses to the interests of the state and the people, and therefore warranted the death penalty", adding that Tang had confessed to his crimes and expressed remorse.

Tang's sentencing is the latest in President Xi Jinping's sweeping anti-graft campaign that has brought down several high-level figures.

Migrants will have to prove their social worth in UK

LONDON, PTI

UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood on Sunday signalled plans for a significant shift in the route to long-term or permanent settlement for legal migrants, involving an assessment of their social worth over and above economic contributions.

In one of her first interviews since taking charge at the UK Home Office, the South Asian heritage minister told 'The Sun on Sunday' newspaper that she is looking at ways to tighten the current process of indefinite leave to remain (ILR) – a route open to long-term migrants and often leading to citizenship.

The government has already indicated plans to double the current five-year timeframe before long-term UK residents can apply for ILR.

"The pace of that migration has been very, very fast. I totally understand why people have concerns about it," Mahmood told the newspaper.

"We need legal migration, it is a good thing. We are a country that has always welcomed people who want to come and work here. But I think in addition to living and working here there is a bigger thing to do as well which is to make sure that people are making a contribution to their wider community and wider society," she said.

"So I am looking at how to make sure that settlement in our country – long term settlement, Indefinite Leave to Remain – is linked not just to the job you are doing, the salary you get, the taxes you pay, [but] also the wider contribution you are making to our communities," she said.

The Kashmiri-origin Labour MP drew upon her own example, pointing to her parents who migrated to Birmingham in the 1960s and 1970s to not just work but contribute.

Trump says 'we will get it done' in the Middle East

Expresses optimism about reaching deal to end war in Gaza

WASHINGTON, REUTERS

US President Donald Trump expressed optimism on Sunday about reaching a deal to end the war in Gaza, saying there is "a real chance for greatness in the Middle East," ahead of talks on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Trump did not provide specific details of a prospective ceasefire-for-hostages agreement in Gaza, but Vice President JD Vance told "Fox News Sunday" that top US officials are immersed in "very complicated" negotiations with Israeli and Arab leaders.

Donald Trump. REUTERS FILE

"We have a real chance for Greatness in the Middle East. All are on board for something special, first time ever. We will get it done," Trump said in a Truth Social post that was issued as he rode in his motorcade to his suburban Virginia golf club.

Trump will meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday at the White House with the aim of reaching a framework for a deal, according to administration officials.

Trump said on Friday talks on Gaza with Middle Eastern nations were intense and that Israel and Palestinian Hamas militants were aware of the discussions, which he said would continue as long as required. Vance described himself as "cautiously hopeful" about reaching a deal.

Hamas urges Israel to halt strikes

Hamas's armed wing urged the Israeli military to temporarily halt air strikes and withdraw from part of Gaza City on Sunday as it tried to locate two Israeli hostages it said it had lost contact with, reports AFP.

Iran condemns UN sanctions

TEHRAN, AFP

Iran on Sunday condemned as "unjustifiable" the reinstatement of United Nations sanctions over its nuclear programme, after the collapse of talks with Western powers and Israeli and US strikes on its nuclear sites.

The measures, which bar dealings linked to the Islamic republic's nuclear and ballistic missile activities, took effect overnight after Western powers triggered the so-called "snapback" mechanism under the 2015 nuclear accord.

"The reactivation of annulled resolutions is legally baseless and unjustifiable... all countries must refrain from recognising this illegal situation," the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement.

MASOUD PEZESHKIAN
Iranian President

"We have always declared our readiness for a logical, fair and just dialogue based on clear criteria, but we will never accept a negotiation that causes us new problems and issues

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will firmly defend its national rights and interests, and any action aimed at undermining the rights and interests of its people will face a firm and appropriate response," it added.

The return of the sanctions ends months of tense diplomacy aimed at reviving nuclear talks derailed since June, when Israeli and US forces bombed Iranian nuclear facilities.

Despite the reimposition, Western leaders stressed channels for dialogue remained open.

Kaja Kallas, the European Union's top diplomat, on Sunday said the reimposition of sanctions "must not be the end of diplomacy".

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio urged Iran to "accept direct talks, held in good faith".

He also called on UN member states to "immediately" implement sanctions to "pressure Iran's leaders to do what is right for their nation, and best for the safety of the world".

The British, French and German foreign ministers said in a joint statement they would continue to seek "a new diplomatic solution to ensure Iran never gets a nuclear weapon".

However, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday rejected any nuclear negotiations that would cause "new problems".

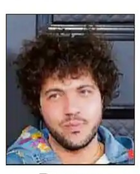
"We have always declared our readiness for a logical, fair and just dialogue based on clear criteria, but we will never accept a negotiation that causes us new problems and issues," Pezeshkian said, according to ISNA news agency.

"The country is ready to face any situation," he noted, adding that "our path is to stand firm, rely on the power of the people, and move with dignity towards a bright future."

Selena Gomez marries music producer Benny Blanco

LOS ANGELES, PTI: Hollywood star Selena Gomez shared a series of pictures on social media on Sunday as she got married to the music producer Benny Blanco.

Selena Gomez



Benny Blanco

The couple, who got engaged in December last year, took the vows on Saturday. Gomez uploaded glimpses from her big day on her Instagram handle and wrote, "9.27.25".

The 33-year-old actor opted for a white sleeveless turtle-neck gown, whereas Blanco, 37, went for a formal suit with a shirt complementing Gomez's outfit.

Blanco is known for producing hits for stars like Justin Bieber, Halsey, Katy Perry, and Ed Sheeran.

Gomez confirmed her relationship with the record producer in December 2023, though the two had been romantically linked since June of that year. The pair had previously collaborated on Gomez's 2015 hit "Same Old Love", 2019's "I Can't Get Enough" and then her 2023 single "Single Soon". The actor most recently appeared in the fifth season of the popular drama series "Only Murders in the Building". The series which also stars Steve Martin and Martin Short in the lead roles, premiered on streaming platforms Hulu and Disney+.

HINDU RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT
Commissioner's Office, 4th Floor, Minto Sri Anjaneya Bhawan, Aluru Venkatarao Road, Chamarajpet, Bangalore-18,
Tel: 26709689/ 26706775, Email: endowmentcommissioner@gmail.com.

No:HRICE-ACT00ACT2/28/2025(1913904) Date: 25.09.2025

E-AUCTION DEPARTMENT

(E-Auction Notification, Eligibility Criteria and Terms and Conditions)
E-Auction For Investment of Surplus Funds in Fixed Deposits (Callable) Through E-Portal of Government of Karnataka.
Schedule of Events For E-Auction
(1) Date of e-Auction Notification **-29.09.2025.** **(2)** Last Date to upload the Eligibility Criteria in Annexure-A & Declaration in Annexure-B & Annexure-c in the e-portal **09.10.2025 on of before 17.00hrs (3)** Evaluation of Bankers Based on Documentary evidence **14.10.2025.(4)** Live Bidding For Public/RRBs sector Banks **16.10.2025 11.00 to 12.00 Hrs / For Private Sector Banks 16.10.2025 12.30 to 1.30 Hrs.**
For any further details please logon to :https://eproc.karanata.gov.in
Note: For any further information and announcement regarding this tender please contacy office of the Commissioner

Sd/- Head Quarters Assistant to the Commissener for Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department, Bangalore

DIPR/CP/2995/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್‌ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ,
ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ, ಇಲಾಖೆ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮಂಡ್ಯ

ಸಂ: 08/2025–2026 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 26.09.2025

ಮಂಡ್ಯ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಮಂಡ್ಯ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಐಟಂವಾರು ದರದ ಟೆಂಡರುಗಳ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ KW-1 & 2, ರ ರೀತಿ ಏಕ ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ https:// kppp. karnataka. gov.in ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಾಗಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳನ್ನು ದಿ: 26.09.2025 ರಿಂದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿಚಾರಣೆ ದಿ: 08.10.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿ: 09.10.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಘಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ, ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿ: 10.10.2025 ಸಂಜೆ 4.31 ಘಂಟೆ ನಂತರ ಅಥವಾ ನಂತರದ ಕೆಲಸದ ದಿನಗಳು, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆ ಬೆಲೆ ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ರಂತೆ. ಕಾಲಮಿತಿ: ಮಳೆಗಾಲ ಸೇರಿ 12 ತಿಂಗಳು, ಒಟ್ಟು 12 (ಹನ್ನೇರಡು), ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಪೈಕಿ ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.37.50 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.6.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ. ಬೆಲೆ ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ರಂತೆ, ಕೆಲಸಗಳ ವಿವರ, ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ., ಮೊತ್ತ ಮುಂತಾದ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸದರಿ ಕಛೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಟಿಪ್ಪಣಿ: 1) ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಸಹಿ ಮಾಡಿರುವವರುಯಾವುದೇ ಕಾರಣಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡದೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯ ಮುಂದೂಡುವಿಕೆ /ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ರದ್ದು ಗೊಳಿಸುವ/ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನಿರಾಕರಿಸುವ ಹಕ್ಕನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. **2)** ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದೆಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಯಲ್ಲಿಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳು ಇದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ, ಬದಲಾಗಿ ವಿದ್ಯುನ್ಮಾನ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆ ವೇದಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾ.ಇಂ.,ಲೋ.ಇ.,ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮಂಡ್ಯ

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
'Khanij Bhavan', 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028
Corporate Identity Number (CIN) – L13100TG1958GOI001674

CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT

E-Tender Notice (Open Tender Enquiry for Domestic Bidding)

Tender Enquiry No: HO(CONTRACTS)/RWLS-2/KDL/281 **Dated**: 29.09.2025

NMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites **online bids** through **MSTC Portal** from experienced, reputed and competent **domestic bidders** for the work of "INSTALLATION OF **RAPID WAGON LOADING SYSTEM (RWLS) – 2**, ON NEW RAILWAY TRACK (3RD RAIL LINE) AT MV SIDING AT KIRANDUL COMPLEX FOR AUGMENTATION OF LOADING FACILITIES"

The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and / or downloaded from **29.09.2025 to 27.10.2025** from following website links:

1. NMDC website - **https://nmdcportals.nmdc.co.in/nmdctender**
2. Central Public Procurement Portal (CPP PORTAL) **http://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app** and
3. MSTC Portal - portal **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprocn/** and search NMDC Tender Event **No NMDC/Head Office/Contract/30/25-26/ET/394**. For further help refer to 'vendor guide' given in MSTC website.

The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through **MSTC portal only**. The details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT. The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website / CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.

For further clarification, the following can be contacted:

1) Shri Satya Prakash, Assistant General Manager (Material Handling), MECON Ltd, Ranchi, Tel No. +91-7226988663, email: **satyaprakash@meconlimited.co.in**
2) Senior Manager (E) / Contracts, NMDC Ltd., Hyderabad, Ph: +91-040-23533536, email: **contracts@nmdc.co.in**

For and on behalf of NMDC Ltd
Executive Director (Works)

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer gesture during the UK Labour Party's annual conference in Liverpool on Sunday. REUTERS

Large Russian drone, missile attack on Kyiv kills 4, injures 10

▸ At least four people were killed when Russia unleashed a barrage of drones and missiles on Ukraine overnight into Sunday, with the capital city of Kyiv suffering the heaviest assault, reports AP from Kyiv.

This is the first major bombardment since an air attack on Kyiv killed at least 21 people last month.

Tymur Tkachenko, head of the Kyiv City Administration, confirmed Sunday's casualties via Telegram, and said 10 others were wounded in the attack that targeted civilian areas across the city. A 12-year-old girl was among the dead.

"The Russians have restarted the child death counter," Tkachenko wrote on Telegram.

Thick black smoke could be seen rising from a blast near the city centre.

The strikes that began overnight and continued after dawn also targeted residential buildings, civilian infrastructure, a medical facility and a kindergarten, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko, who also said damage was reported at more than 20 locations across the capital.

12 Indian fishermen held in Lanka

▸ At least 12 Indian fishermen were arrested and their boat seized on Sunday near Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka, the Navy said here, reports PTI from Colombo.

The operation was conducted by the Northern Naval Command in coordination with the Sri Lanka Coast Guard.

"In the wee hours of September 28, 2025, the Sri Lanka Navy seized one Indian fishing boat and apprehended 12 Indian fishermen while they were poaching in Sri Lankan waters, off the Delft Island in Jaffna," the Navy said in a statement. The group of Indian fishing boats were spotted "engaging in illegal fishing, trespassing into Sri Lankan waters," it said.

A newly discovered 4,500-year-old gold brooch has been unearthed during the ongoing Troy excavations in Turkey's northwestern Çanakkale province. Unearthed alongside a rare jade stone, the ring-shaped brooch, dating back to the Early Bronze Age, is the best-preserved of only three known worldwide, making it one of the most significant archaeological finds of the past century. AFP

Taliban release US citizen

▸ The Taliban on Sunday freed a US citizen from an Afghan prison, weeks after they said they had reached an agreement with US envoys on a prisoner exchange as part of an effort to normalise relations, reports AP from Islamabad.

The deputy spokesperson for the Taliban Foreign Ministry, Zia Ahmad Takal, identified the man as Amir Amiri. He did not say when Amiri was detained, why, or where.

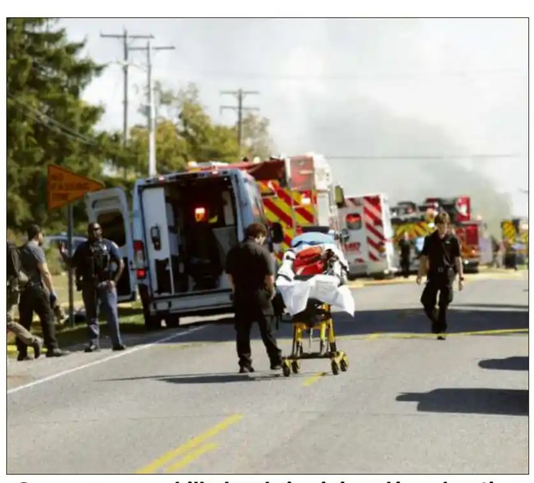
An official with knowledge of the release said Amiri had been detained in Afghanistan since December 2024 and was on his way back to the US The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the details with the media.

3 killed, 8 injured in bar shooting

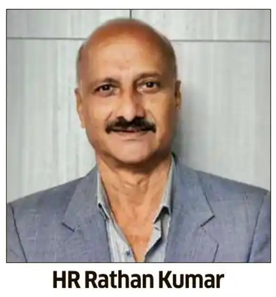
▸ Three people were killed and at least eight others wounded late Saturday when someone opened fire from a boat into a crowd gathered at a waterfront bar in a coastal town in North Carolina, authorities said, reports AP from Southport.

The shooting erupted about 9:30 pm near a popular stretch of bars and restaurants on Southport's waterfront, a historic port town about 48 km south of Wilmington.

Investigators said the assailant piloted a small boat close to shore, stopped briefly and fired into the crowd.



One person was killed and nine injured in a shooting at a Mormon church in Michigan, on Sunday. REUTERS



HR Rathan Kumar

Rathan elected KSBA president

BENGALURU, DHNS: HR Rathan Kumar was elected as the new president of the Karnataka State Billiards Association during their Annual General Meeting and election held here on Sunday.

CR Nanda Kumar was appointed as the vice-president while HE Anand will take over as the secretary.

Executive committee: HR Rathan Kumar (President), CR Nanda Kumar (Vice-President), HE Anand (Secretary), IH Manudev (Joint Secretary), N Girish (Treasurer).

Committee members: Aruananda, MS Arun, Chethan Nanjappa, BL Harshadeep, BC Karthik, Rawoof Ur Rahman, Sanjay M Punjabi, S Shekar, Varghese Pallath.

BFC soar to a thumping win

BENGALURU, DHNS: Former champions Bengaluru FC roared to a 3-0 win over Bharat Bengaluru FC in the KSFA Super Division League Championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium here on Sunday.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

Ashik Adhikari opened the scoring for the Blues' development side in the 14th minute before Yaimharemba Chingangakham doubled the advantage in the 35th minute. Serto Wornei Len Kom then struck in the 68th minute to seal a thumping win for BFC.

Results: BFC: 3 (Ashik Adhikari 14th, Yaimharemba Chingangakham 35th, Serto Wornei Len Kom 68th) bt Bharat Bengaluru FC: 0; MFAR Students Union FC: 2 (Wamkholen Doungel 52nd, Malsawmdawng Kima 76th) bt Bangalore Dream United FC: 1 (Muhamned Adhil Shan MA 46th); Parikrma FC: 1 (Manglenthang Singsit 57th) drew with Sporting Club Bengaluru: 1 (Ishaan Raghunandan 59th).

A slice of action during the KSFA Super Division League Championship clash at the BFS on Sunday.
DH PHOTO/ PUSHKAR V

IN BRIEF

Chahar dazzles on Surrey debut

▸ India leg-spinner Rahul Chahar broke a 166-year-old record by grabbing eight wickets on his Surrey debut in county cricket, reports PTI from New Delhi.

His figures of 24-7-51-8 against Hampshire were the best figures by a debutant for Surrey, going past Willian Mudle's mark of 7/61 set in 1859.

Abhay stuns World No. 5

▸ Indian squash player Abhay Singh on Sunday stunned World No. 5 Karim Gawad from Egypt (11-6, 11-4, 1-11, 11-9) in the opening round of the Qatar Classic squash, a USD 231,500 PSA Platinum event, in Doha, reports PTI.

◆ ON TV ◆

FOOTBALL
EPL: Everton vs West Ham (**12:30 am, Tuesday**). **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network.**

SWIMMING
Asian Aquatics C'ships: Day 2, finals (**6 pm**). **LIVE** on **DD Sports.**

CRICKET
1st T20I: Nepal vs West Indies (**8 pm**). **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

PARA ATHLETICS
World C'ships: Day 3 (**9:30 pm**). **LIVE** on **DD Sports.**

CRICKET ASIA CUP

INDIANS INVINCIBLE

Tilak produces superb innings as Men In Blue down Pakistan to win ninth continental trophy

R KAUSHIK
DUBAI

Under immense pressure, Tilak Varma produced inarguably the most important knock of his life, muscling India to a five-wicket victory and extending their lease over the Asia Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday night.

India made a terrible hash of what ought to have been a regulation chase of 147 after triggering a sensational Pakistan collapse that saw the last nine wickets fall for just 33 runs in 39 deliveries. From 113 for one, Pakistan crumbled to 146 when they looked good for at least 40 more, but through Shaheen Shah Afridi and Faheem Ashraf and a host of slower deliveries, they had India reeling at 20 for three after four overs.

With the in-form Abhishek Sharma, as well as Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav back in the hut, India needed someone to put his hand up and complement the brilliance of Kuldeep Yadav, whose four for 30 had brought India back into a contest that seemed to be running away from them. Tilak took it upon himself to mastermind the chase, stitching together important alliances with Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube, who followed up a tidy spell with the new ball with an impetus-lending knock as the required rate mounted.

Tilak Varma

India didn't panic, waiting for their moments with Tilak exemplifying their composure. Pakistan believed they were in with a chance all the way through but Tilak baulked them with intelligence and enterprise. When the occasion and the ball so demanded, he unfurled the big strokes but he didn't take any risks during successive partnerships of 57 and 60 with Samson and Dube respectively.

Missing Hardik Pandya through injury, India chose to bulk up their batting and Rinku Singh, playing his first competitive game for four months, applied the finishing touches with two deliveries to spare, carting Haris Rauf over mid-on for the winning boundary that sent a nation into raptures and consigned Pakistan to a third successive defeat to their fiercest rivals in this competition. Tilak was unbeaten in the end with 69, worth its weight in gold, given all the acrimony and drama in the lead-up to the final, which itself thankfully passed without incident.

The Pakistan nosedive came without warning. When Sahibzada Farhan and Fakhar Zaman were in the middle and taking the fight to them, India seemed bereft of ideas and running on empty. After a cursory period of figuring out how the surface was holding up, the right-hander Farhan got stuck into Jasprit Bumrah, carting him for boundaries with the same impunity as in the previous games. Farhan became the first batter in all T20s to hit Bumrah for three sixes in all, and as he brought up his fifty and the score started to mount, India needed a moment of inspiration.

That was provided by Varun Chakravarthy, who finally forced Farhan into a mistake with a pull that was snaffled at deep mid-wicket. Even then, there was no indication of the drama to follow, until Saim Ayub picked out point while trying to cut Kuldeep. The left-arm wrist-spinner, the tournament's leading wicket-taker, began uncertainly but brought all his guile into play as the innings went deep and Pakistan courted disaster with one poor stroke after another.

Despite missing Pandya, India were well served by their spinners while Bumrah came late to the party. Axar Patel was tidy with his left-arm spin, but it was Kuldeep who spun the most wicked web; he picked up three wickets in his final over which went for only just one run as Pakistan fell well short of a strong total.

Presentation delayed

The trophy presentation was delayed inordinately after the match. While the Indian team waited on the boundary lines, the Pakistan team was nowhere to be seen. At the time of going to the press, it's learnt that India had conveyed a message to the authorities that they didn't want to receive the trophy from Mohsin Naqvi, the head of the Asian Cricket Council.

India's Kuldeep Yadav (right) celebrates the wicket of Pakistan's Shaheen Shah Afridi during the Asia Cup final in Dubai on Sunday. AP /PTI

SCORE BOARD

PAKISTAN

Farhan c Gill b Chakravarthy	57 (38b, 5x4, 3x6)
Zaman c Kuldeep b Chakravarthy	46 (35b, 2x4, 2x6)
Ayub c Bumrah b Kuldeep	14 (11b, 2x4)
Haris c Rinku b Axar	0 (2b)
Agha c Samson b Kuldeep	8 (7b)
Talat c Samson b Axar	1 (2b)
Nawaz c Rinku b Bumrah	6 (9b)
Afridi lbw b Kuldeep	0 (3b)
Ashraf c Tilak b Kuldeep	0 (2b)
Rauf b Bumrah	6 (4b, 1x4)
Abrar (not out)	1 (2b)
Extras (B-1, LB-2, W-4)	7
Total (all out, 19.1 overs)	**146**

Fall of wickets: 1-84 (Farhan), 2-113 (Ayub), 3-114 (Haris), 4-126 (Zaman), 5-131 (Talat), 6-133 (Agha), 7-134 (Afridi), 8-134 (Ashraf), 9-141 (Rauf).

Bowling: Dube 3-0-23-0, Bumrah 3.1-0-25-2, Chakravarthy 4-0-30-2, Axar 4-0-26-2, Kuldeep 4-0-30-4 (w-4), Tilak 1-0-9-0.

INDIA

Abhishek c Rauf b Ashraf	5 (6b, 1x4)
Gill c Rauf b Ashraf	12 (10b, 1x4)
Suryakumar c Agha b Afridi	1 (5b)
Tilak (not out)	69 (53b, 3x4, 4x6)
Samson c Farhan b Abrar	24 (31b, 2x4, 1x6)
Dube c Afridi b Ashraf	33 (22b, 2x4, 2x6)
Rinku (not out)	4 (1b, 1x4)
Extras (W-2)	2
Total (for 5 wkts, 19.4 overs)	**150**

Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Abhishek), 2-10 (Suryakumar), 3-20 (Gill), 4-77 (Samson), 5-137.

Bowling: Afridi 4-0-20-1, Ashraf 4-0-29-3, Nawaz 1-0-6-0, Rauf 3.4-0-50-0 (w-1), Abrar 4-0-29-1 (w-1), Ayub 3-0-16-0.

Result: India won by 5 wkts

KSCA Secretary's XI falter

Madhya Pradesh stay marginally ahead at the end of day 3 of the final

BENGALURU, DHNS

KSCA Secretary's XI failed to seize the initiative as they were bowled out for 318 in 99.1 overs, before Madhya Pradesh produced a nervy batting show in an attritional third day to stay marginally ahead in the Dr (Capt) Thimmappiah Memorial tournament final here at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday.

Resuming at their overnight score of 163/4, Madhav P Bajaj (64 not out) and Kruthik Krishna (57) reached their respective half-centuries but failed to get any support from the rest, resulting in the hosts handing MP a slender 20-run lead.

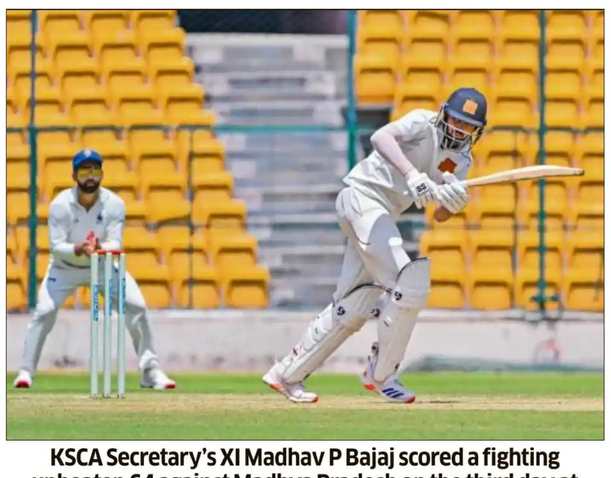
Aryan Pandey (4/64) and Kumar Kartikeya (4/55) starred with the ball for Madhya Pradesh.

In their second innings, Rishabh Chouhan (21 not out) and Venkatesh Iyer (19 not out) dug deep after a flurry of four quick wickets as the visitors reached 96 for four, leading the hosts by 116 runs.

After claiming a five-for in the first innings, Venkatesh M was again among the wickets, picking up 2/17, while Abhishek Ahlawat and Madhav bagged one apiece.

Yash Dubey (23) and Himanshu Mantri (24) got off to decent starts but failed to help MP assume total control of the final.

Brief scores: Madhya Pradesh: 338 all out & 96/4 in 35 overs (Venkatesh M 2-17) vs KSCA Secretary's XI: (O/n: 163/4) 318 all out in 99.1 overs (Nikin Jose 62, Tushar Singh 35, Dhruv P 28, Kruthik Krishna 57, Madhav P Bajaj 64; Aryan Pandey 4-64, Kumar Kartikeya 4-55).



KSCA Secretary's XI Madhav P Bajaj scored a fighting unbeaten 64 against Madhya Pradesh on the third day at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. DH PHOTO/KRISHNAKUMAR P S

AIFF SGM on October 12

NEW DELHI, PTI: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has convened a Special General Body meeting on October 12 to adopt the draft Constitution and other amendments in line with the Supreme Court ruling.

World football governing body FIFA has set an October 30 deadline for the AIFF to adopt the new Constitution.

"The SGM has been called for special agenda. It has been just to adopt the Constitution, and there is no other agenda," a top AIFF official told PTI on Sunday.

The SGM will be held in the national capital, where the AIFF is headquartered.

The Supreme Court on September 19 approved the draft constitution of the AIFF prepared by former apex court judge L Nageswara Rao with certain modifications, and directed the football body to adopt it within four weeks in a general body meeting.

Under the draft constitution, the executive committee of the AIFF would have 14 members.

Different presenters at toss

DUBAI, PTI

Animosity between India and Pakistan team continued prior to the mega final of the Asia Cup with two presenters -- India's Ravi Shastri and Pakistan's Waqar Younis -- conducting the snap interviews at the toss.

This is the first time in the history of international cricket that two former players conducted the toss interview as Pakistan didn't want to speak to Indian presenter Shastri following the extremely bitter build-up to the title clash.

It is learnt that from among the broadcasters, Shastri, who has done the toss presentation during the earlier two Indo-Pak games in the tournament, had been assigned to speak to both Suryakumar Yadav and Salman Ali Agha after the toss.

However, a request was sent to the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for a neutral presenter. When the ACC went back to BCCI with the request, they had clearly mentioned that Shastri can't be replaced.

There was no love lost between India captain Suryakumar Yadav (right) and his Pakistani counterpart Salman Agha ahead of the Asia Cup final in Dubai on Sunday. AFP

As a middle-of-the-road solution, it was decided that Pakistan skipper Salman would speak to his country's pace legend Waqar, while Surya would interact with former India head coach Shastri.

Also, in a departure from convention, Salman did the trophy shoot alone instead of doing alongside his Indian counterpart.

Indian para athletes draw blank on second day

NEW DELHI, PTI: Bulgaria's Ruzhdi **(in pic)** claimed his sixth successive gold medal in the men's shot put F55 competition with a world record throw in the World Para Athletics Championships here on Sunday.

The 34-year-old sent the iron ball to a distance of 12.94m in his sixth and final attempt, bettering his own world record of 12.68m which he had set in the 2023 World Championships in Paris, in the event in which athletes compete from a seated position as they do not have lower limb function.

Serbia's Nebojsa Duric took the silver with a personal best 12.52m while Lech Stoltman of Poland was third with 12.02m.

Three world records were smashed during the morning session of the second day of the championships.

Malaysia's Abdul Latif Romly completed a hat-trick of men's long jump T20 gold medals in World Championships with a world record effort of 7.67m. Volodymyr Ponomarenko of Ukraine set a men's shot put T12 world record with 17.39m on his second attempt to take the top spot. No Indian could win a medal on the second day after the one gold, one silver and one bronze on Saturday.

Long jumper Vikas tried hard but failed short of a podium finish. He finished sixth in the men's T47 long jump final with an effort of 6.96m. His team-mate Ajay Singh was unable to improve on his season best jump of 6.31m and finished 10th.

Arsenal roar late against Newcastle

NEWCASTLE, REUTERS

Arsenal defender Gabriel Magalhaes headed a stoppage-time winner from a corner to secure his side a 2-1 Premier League victory over Newcastle United at St James' Park on Sunday and close the gap on leaders Liverpool to two points with a stunning late show.

Arsenal climbed to second place in the table with 13 points from six matches while Newcastle are in 15th with six points from the same number of games.

Newcastle took the lead in the 34th minute when Nick Woltemade rose highest to meet a cross from a short corner and head into the net after Arsenal defender Cristhian Mosquera had needlessly given away the set-piece with a miscued back-pass.

The visitors were frustrated as they wasted several opportunities, but netted twice late on as Mikel Merino glanced in a header in the 84th minute, before Gabriel found the winner in the 96th.

Aston Villa secured their first Premier League win of the season as Ollie Watkins snapped his scoring drought to inspire a 3-1 comeback victory at home to Fulham on Sunday.

When Raul Jimenez headed Fulham in front from Sasa Lukic's corner it looked like being another day of frustration for Unai Emery's misfiring side but Watkins lifted the mood.

The England forward, without a goal in any competition this season, was sent clear by Lucas Digne in the 37th minute and he took a silky touch before flicking a finish over Bernd Leno.

Arsenal's Gabriel Magalhaes (right) celebrates after scoring a last-gasp winner against Newcastle United on Sunday. REUTERS

Villa had managed only one goal in their opening five league matches, but they scored twice in the space of two second half minutes as they finally threw off the shackles.

John McGinn buried a low left-footed effort from the edge of the area in the 49th minute before Watkins turned provider, pulling back a pass for Emiliano Buendia to fire home.

Victory lifted Villa to 16th placed with six points while Fulham are 10th with eight points.

Thomas Frank said the Premier League is "relentless" after his Tottenham side needed Joao Palhinha's stoppage-time strike to salvage a 1-1 draw at home to bottom-of-the-table Wolves on Saturday.

Pranavi Urs

Pranavi secures top 5 spot

DEAUVILLE (FRANCE), PTI: Indian golfer Pranavi Urs produced her best round of the week on the final day to finish at tied-fifth at the Lacoste Ladies Open de France here.

She carded a 6-under 65, which was three shots better than her second round, that helped her finish in top five in the LET event held at the Golf Barriere de Deauville.

Diksha Dagar began the final round on the back nine and carded an even par round 71 to end at T-46 with a total of one under par.

Shubham clinches title

BENGALURU, DHNS: Shubham Jain trounced Vinay SK 11-4, 11-5, 11-7 to clinch the non-medallist singles title in the JTTA 8th State-tanking table tennis tournament at the BMS Engineering College here on Sunday.

Results (all finals): U-17: Boys: Atharva Nawarange bt Shubham Trivedi 11-8, 11-9, 11-7.
Girls: Himanshi Chowdhary bt Hiya Singh 11-13, 11-9, 11-4, 11-7.
U-15: Boys: Aman George Thomas bt Vedant Vashisht 11-9, 11-9, 12-10
Girls: Lakshmi Aashritha bt Mihika Udupa 2-11, 11-8, 11-9, 6-11, 11-9.
Non medallists: Singles: Shubham Jain bt Vinay SK 11-4, 11-5, 11-7.
Doubles: Gagan Kumar/ Prithvi karadagi bt Arnold and Shubham 11-4, 11-5, 6-11, 11-3.

Heart wins main event

KOLKATA RESULTS

Deepesh Narredu-trained Heart, ridden by Trevor Patel, won the Calcutta Monsoon Derby, the feature event of the Kolkata races on Sunday.

1. Bold Display Handicap - 1100M: Happy Morning (Suchit Jayaraj Shah) Antony Raj 1; Epic Day (Chetan Gowda) 2; Princess Peach (Aleemuddinj) 3; Diamond Gold (Imran Chisty) 4; Wb: 1-1/2, 2-3/4, 3/4L. T: 1:07.70. TB: B Mahesh. Fav: Epic Day.
2. Tenno Sho Cup -1200M: Black Eagle (Faiz Adam) Vishal Bunde 1; Clifford (Neeraj Rawal) 2; Supreme Grandeur (Suraj Narredu) 3; Raffaello (Imran Chisty) 4; Wb: 3, Lnk, 3/4L. T: 1:12.02. TB: Rajender Reddy. Fav: Clifford.
3. Shivalik Showers Cup - 1100M: Lord Vader (Suchit Jayraj Shah) Hasib Alam 1; Dona Sienna (G Vivek) 2; Sabar (Nazill) 3; Trillionaire (Vishal Bunde) 4; Not Run: Fast Approach. Wb: 1-1/2, Hd, 3/4L, T: 1:00.01. TB: B Mahesh. Fav: Oishika.
4. Elistano Handicap (Div I) - 1400M: Dance Along (Anil Saraf) Yash Narredu 1; Jean Lafette (G Vivek) 2; City Of Joy (Vishal Bunde) 3; Dancing Queen (Varun) 4; Not Run: Three Little Words. Wb: 4, 2-1/4, 6L. 1:25.52. TB: Rajesh Narredu. Fav: Dance Along
5. Elistano Handicap (Div II) - 1400M: Don'tstopthemusic (Koushith Datta) Aleemudin 1; Enola Holmes (JH Arul) 2; Only Dreams (Tejeshwar) 3; Oh My Sweetheart (Varun) 4; Wb: 9-1/4, 1-1/4, 7-1/4L. T: 1:25.00. TB: Pattrick Quinn. Fav: Only Dreams.
6. Mountain Lily Handicap - 1400M: Zuri (Farouq Rattonsey) Trevor Patel 1; Mystical Dawn (Akshay Kumar) 2; Natural Grace (Neeraj Rawal) 3; Salome (Vaibhav) 4; Wb: 2-3/4, 2-1/4, 1-3/4l. T: 1:25.61. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Zuri.
7. Free Energy Handicap - 1400M: King Louis (Ms Esha Banerjee) G Vivek 1; Merchant Of Venice (Ashhad Asbar) 2; King Of Mafia (Anton Raj) 3; Stormy Ocean (Azaruddin) 4; Wb: 2-1/2, 3/4, 5-1/4L. T: 1:25.19. TB: Neil Darashah. Fav: Aabushan.
8. Monsoon Cup - 2000M: High Command (SB Nair) Trevor Patel 1; Sativur (Imran Chisty) 2; Good Deeds (Neeraj Rawal) 3; Third Avenue (Tejeshwar) 4; Wb: 7-1/4, 5-1/4, 1-1/2L. T: 2:05.35. TB: Deshmukh. Fav: High Command.
9. Calcutta Monsoon Derby - 2000M: Heart (Ram H Shroff) Trevor Patel 1; Arabeska (Akshay Kumar) 2; Racing Ruler (Sandesh) 3; Gold Empire (Yash Narredu) 4; Wb: 3, 4L, Dist. T: 2:05.90. TB: Deepesh Narredu. Fav: Racng Ruler.
10. Ascriptive Handicap (Div I) - 1600M: Polka Dot (Mrs Menaka Gupta) Trevor Patel 1; Paulite Warrior (Vishla Bunde) 2; Sporting Trainer (Varun) 3; The Presence (Aleemuddin) 4; Wb: 2-1/2, Shd, Dist. T: 1:41.59. TB: Aashay Doctor. Fav: Polka Dot.
11. Ascriptive Handicap (Div II) - 1600M: Oh My Darling (Mohammed Shakeel) Aleemuddin 1; Keitaro (Imran Chisty) 2; Queen Of Maiia (Suraj Narredu) 3; Cool Daddy (Tejeshwar) 4; Wb: 1, 4, 6L. T: 1:42.61. TB: Shafiq Khan. Fav: Queen Of Mafia.
Bengaluru dividends:
I race: Rs 35w; 16, 15, 36p; Fc: Rs 91; Q: Rs 45; Shp: Rs 39; Thp: Rs 88; Tri: Rs 721 & 727; Ex: Rs 2,794 & 823.
II race: Rs 73w; Rs 22, 10p; Fc: Rs 455; Q: Rs 45; Shp: Rs 26; Thp: Rs 27; Tri: Rs 223 & 109; Ex: Rs 364 & 219.
III race: Rs 265w; 41, 15, 16p; Fc: Rs 5,483; Q: Rs 1,804; Shp: Rs 40; Thp: Rs 50; Tri: Rs 3,679 & 2,102; Ex: Rs 16,285.
IV race: Rs 12w; 10, 11, 16p; Fc: Rs 31; Q: Rs 16; Shp: Rs 21; Thp: Rs 28; Tri: Rs 43 & 17; Ex: Rs 168 & 136.
V race: Rs 37w; 11, 13, 10p; Fc: Rs 124; Q: Rs 94; Shp: Rs 25; Thp: Rs 41; Tri: Rs 120 & 41; Ex: Rs 248 & 226.
VI race: Rs 19w; 14, 17, 16p; Fc: Rs 55; Q: Rs 40; Shp: Rs 35; Thp: Rs 39; Tri: Rs 139 & 63; Ex: Rs 3,545 & 1.823.
VII race: Rs 34w; 15, 13, 21p; Fc: Rs 83; Q: Rs 56; Shp: Rs 26; Thp: Rs 56; Tri: Rs 753 & 337; Ex: Rs 5,398 & 3,238.
VIII race: Rs 15w; 13, 14p; Fc: Rs 23; Q: Rs 24; Shp: Rs 17; Thp: Rs 28; Tri: Rs 49 & 34; Ex: Rs 168 & 81.
IX race: Rs 42w; 16, 19, 12p; Fc: Rs 246; Q: Rs 114; Shp: Rs 53; Thp: Rs 42; Tri: Rs 397 & 135; Ex: Rs 7,983 & 11,975.
X race: 13w; 10, 13, 10p; Fc: Rs 27; Q: Rs 27; Shp: Rs 25; Thp: Rs 23; Tri: Rs 90 & 40; Ex: Rs 63 & 29.
XI race: 46w; 17, 14, 10p; Fc: Rs 198; Q: Rs 100; Shp: Rs 36; Thp: Rs 42; Tri: Rs 300 & 57; Ex: Rs 496 & 353.
Jackpot: Rs 1,962 (316). **Runner-up:** Rs 166 (1597). **I treble:** Rs 7,753 (1). **II treble:** Rs 288 (22). **III treble:** Rs 26 5 (43).

Sneha SS

State's Sneha sprints to gold; Manikanta sets new meet record

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a domestic season where Sneha SS has hardly missed standing on the podium, the sprinter crossed the finish line first in the women's 100m dash to give Karnataka their first gold of the 64th National Open Athletics Championships at the Birsa Munda Stadium in Ranchi on Sunday.

The 27-year-old clocked 11.62 seconds to clinch gold ahead of Maharashtra's Sudeshna Shivnkar (11.64s) and Tamil Nadu's Abinaya Rajarajan (11.67s) who took the silver and bronze respectively.

In the men's 100m race, Karnataka's Manikanta HH, who is representing Services Sports Control Board here, blazed the track to created a new meet record en route to gold with a time of 10.19 seconds. Pranav Gurav of Maharashtra (10.31s) won silver and Harsh Raut of SSCB (10.38s) took home a bronze.

Results (gold & Karnataka medallists): Men: 100m: Manikanta HH (SSCB) 10.19s, 1.
110m hurdles: Manav R (Railways) 13.97s, 1; Krishik M (Kar) 14.02s, 2.
400m: Rajesh Ramesh (Railways) 45.75s, 1.
1500m: Sunil Dawar (SSCB) 3:46.27, 1.
Discus throw: Kirpal Singh (ONGC) 56.33m, 1.
Decathlon: Usaid (SSCB) 7212 points, 1.
Women: 100m: Sneha SS (Kar) 11.62s, 1.
100m hurdles: Nandhini K (TN) 13.57s, 1; Shreeya Rajesh (Kar) 13.91s, 3.
400m: Neeru Pahtak (UP) 52.85s, 1; Priya Mohan (Kar) 54.04s, 3.
1500m: Lili Das (Railways) 4:15.59, 1.
High jump: Gobika K (TN) 1.79m, 1.
Shot put: Yogita (Railways) 16.52m, 1.
4x400 mixed relay: Uttar Pradesh (3:23.62) 1.

CRICKET

Manhas elected BCCI president; Bhat treasurer

Amita to head women's selection panel; Jaydev, Jayesh elevated

MUMBAI, PTI

From left: A Raghuram Bhat (treasurer), Prabhtej Bhatia (joint secretary), Devajit Saikia (secretary), Mithun Manhas (president), Rajeev Shukla (vice-president), Arun Dhumal (IPL chairman), Jaydev Shah (Apex Council member), M Khairul Jamal Majumdar (IPL Governing Council representative), at the BCCI AGM in Mumbai on Sunday. X

Former Delhi captain Mithun Manhas was on Sunday elected president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) here.

Manhas, 45, became the 37th president of the Board, as he succeeded Roger Binny who resigned last month after turning 70.

The former all-rounder, who featured in 157 first-class, 130 List A and 55 IPL matches between 1997-98 and 2016-17, had emerged as the consensus choice following an informal meeting of the Board's power brokers in New Delhi earlier this month.

Manhas has an impressive tally of 9714 first-class runs with 27 centuries to go with 4126 runs in List A matches.

Karnataka State Cricket Association's incumbent president Raghuram Bhat was also confirmed as the new treasurer of BCCI. Left-arm spinner Bhat, an outstanding performer for Karnataka with 374 wickets in 82 first-class matches, represented India in two Tests with the legendary Pakistani Javed Miandad being his first victim in international cricket.

Since his retirement from cricket, Bhat has gone on to don many hats -- coach, selector and administrator, most recently being elected as the president of KSCA in November 2022. Bhat's term at KSCA is set to conclude at the end of this month when a new set of office bearers are to be elected for the State association.

The AGM also confirmed Amita Sharma as chairperson of the women's selection panel, replacing Neetu David. The former India fast bowler, who played 116 ODIs, will be joined by Shyama Dey, Jaya Sharma and Sravanthi Naidu. Their tenure will begin after the women's World Cup being held in India and Sri Lanka from September 30 to November 2.

Former India internationals RP Singh and Pragyan Ojha were inducted into the men's selection panel, while ex-Tamil Nadu batter S Sharath returned to the junior selection committee.

Welcoming Manhas' election, former India spinner Harbhajan Singh, attending the AGM as Punjab Cricket Association's representative, said a cricketer at the helm of affairs of the Board was a positive step.

Former spinner Harbhajan also urged the BCCI to contribute towards relief work in flood-hit Punjab and other north Indian states.

(With inputs from DHNS in Bengaluru)

OFFICIALS IN CHARGE

- **New office bearers:** Mithun Manhas (president), Rajeev Shukla (vice-president), Devajit Saikia (Secretary), Prabhtej Bhatia (joint secretary), A Raghuram Bhat (treasurer).
- **IPL Governing Council representatives:** Arun Singh Dhumal, M Khairul Jamal Majumdar.
- **Apex Council representative:** Jaydev Shah.
- **Men's Selection Committee:** Ajit Agarkar (chairperson), Shiv Sundar Das, Ajay Ratra, RP Singh, Pragyan Ojha.
- **Women's Selection Committee:** Amita Sharma (chairperson), Shyama Dey, Sulakshana Naik, Jaya Sharma, Sravanthi Naidu.
- **Junior Cricket Committee:** S Sharath (chairperson), Harvinder Sodhi, Pathik Patel, Krishna Mohan, Ranadeb Bose.
- **WPL committee:** Jayesh George (chairperson), Mithun Manhas, Rajeev Shukla, Devajit Saikia, Prabhtej Bhatia, A Raghuram Bhat, Madhumati Lele, Sanjay Tandon, RI Palani, Arun Singh Dhumal.
- **Infrastructure Committee:** Rohan Jaitley (chairperson), Mithun Manhas, Rajeev Shukla, Devajit Saikia, Prabhtej Bhatia, A Raghuram Bhat, Anirudh Chaudhury, Sana Sathish Babu.

Sizzling Srihari ends long wait

Bengalurean bags two silver and one bronze on Day 1

ADITYA K HALDER
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Srihari Natraj celebrates after winning one of the two silvers on the opening day of the Asian Aquatics Championships in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Srihari Nataraj ended India's 16-year wait for a medal at the Asian Aquatics Championships with a memorable show as the 24-year-old Bengaluru man clinched three medals -- two silver and a bronze -- on the opening day of the event here on Sunday.

India's last medals in the event came back at the 2009 edition in China, where India won one silver and six bronze. It's also worth noting that the ongoing edition in Gujarat is taking place after a nine-year hiatus.

Srihari's medal run started with the first final of the swimming events as he clocked 1:48.47 seconds in the 200m freestyle to finish behind China's Haibo Xu (1:46.83). It was a close battle for the silver as Japanese Hinata Ando finished fraction of a second behind the Indian (1:48.73) at third.

Srihari, who improved his 100m and 200m freestyle national records at the World University Games last year, won his second medal in a closely-contested 50m backstroke. The Indian ace swimmer (25.46) finished a mere 350 thousandths of a second behind another Chinese opponent Gukailai Wang (25.46). India's Rishabh Das finished fifth (25.98) in the same event while the silver went to Chinese Taipei's Mu Lun Chuang (25.50).

His third came a bronze as the youngster swam the last leg (freestyle) of the 4x100m medley relay while teaming up with Rishabh Das (backstroke), Likith Selvaraj (breaststroke) and Rohit Benedicton (butterfly). The quartet clocked 3:40.87 behind China (3:36.93) and Chinese Taipei (3:39.40) for the third spot.

Aquatics giants China dominated the day by winning 11 of the 14 events contested on the day.

Results: Swimming: Men: 50m backstroke: Gukailai Wang (CHN) 25.11s, 1; Srihari Nataraj (IND) 25.46, 2; Mu Lun Chuang (TPE) 25.50, 3.
100 m butterfly: Kuan Hung Wang (TPE) 52.41s, 1; Maxim Skazobtsov (KAZ) 52.66, 2; Taiyu Li (CHN) 52.76, 3.
200m freestyle: Haibo Xu (CHN) 1:46.83, 1; Srihari Nataraj (IND) 1:48.47, 2; Hinata Ando (JPN) 1:48.73, 3.
200m breaststroke: Haiyang Qin (CHN) 2:09.46, 1; Iori Miyazaki (JPN) 2:12.47, 2; Thanh Bao Pham (VIE) 2:12.50, 3.
4x100m medley relay: China 3:36.93, 1; Chinese Taipei 3:39.40, 2; India 3:40.87, 3.
Women: 50m backstroke: Jiawei Li (CHN) 28.13s, 1; Sofiya Abubakirova (KAZ) 28.90, 2; Misaki Kasahara (JPN) 28.96, 3. **100m butterfly:** Zhenqi Gong (CHN) 59.17, 1; Pei Yin Liu (TPE) 1:00.07, 2; Sofia Spodarenko (KAZ) 1:01.14, 3.
200m freestyle: Mingyu Luo (CHN) 2:01.31, 1; Thi My Tien Vo (VIE) 2:01.95, 2; Xintong Wang (HKG) 2:02.30, 3.
200m breaststroke: Mana Ishikawa (JPN) 2:26.36, 1; Koharu Nakazawa (JPN) 2:27.51, 2; Jialian Candice Gao (HKG) 2:29.61, 3.
1500m freestyle faster heat: Pac Tung Nikita Lam (HKG) 17:08.36, 1; Kha Nhi Nguyen (VIE) 17:23.60, 2; Thitirat Charoensup (THA) 17:30.36, 3.
4x100m medley relay: China 4:06.16, 1; Japan 4:08.54, 2; Hong Kong 4:12.79, 3.
Diving: Men: 1m springboard: Xiaohu Tai (CHN) 402.95 pts, 1; Muhammad Syafiq Puteh (MAS) 333.35, 2; Hengnuo Lin 330.90, 3.
Synchronised 3m springboard: Hengnuo Lin/ Yiyang Wu 384.99 pts, 1; Elvis Priestly Clement/ Muhammad Syafiq Puteh 342.30, 2; Igor Myalin/ Vyacheslav Kachanov (UZB) 319.17
Women: Synchronised 3m springboard: Linxi Ye/ Mengyuan Deng (CHN) 282.60 pts, 1; Ker Ying Ong/ Nur Muhammad Abrar Raj (MAS) 233.34, 2; Barbara Chen/ Jacqueline Chen (TPI), 3.

McIlroy, Lowry silence raucous US crowd to take lead

FARMINGDALE, AFP: Europe battled through a torrent of insults from a raucous crowd to grab a record seven-point lead over the United States and move to the brink of retaining the Ryder Cup with a dominant display at Bethpage Black on Saturday.

The reigning champions won both the foursomes and four-ball sessions by 3-1 to seize a commanding 11.5-4.5 lead despite an intense atmosphere with over-the-top remarks causing Rory McIlroy to swear at hecklers who disturbed him multiple times while trying to make putts.

Europe need only two wins and a draw from Sunday's 12 concluding singles matches to retain the Cup.

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